

**Coping as Kin: Responses to Suffering amongst
Displaced Meskhetian Turks in post-Soviet Krasnodar,
Russian Federation**

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Abstract

This thesis examines responses to displacement and suffering among a small Muslim population presently resident in post-Soviet Russia. The Meskhetian Turks were deported from Georgia in 1944, and resettled in Central Asia. In 1989, violent attacks led to further migration of most Meskhetian Turks in Uzbekistan. Some moved to Krasnodar in southern Russia, where they continue to suffer discrimination by the region's authorities. The thesis examines how Meskhetian Turks live in diaspora, and how their traumatic experiences have been integrated into and mediated through everyday and life-cycle practices. It critiques the representation of post-Soviet and post-displacement lives as dominated by crisis, arguing that Meskhetian Turks rather emphasise continuity and the mundane experience of life in diaspora.

The events of 1989 and 1944 are rarely discussed, are not commemorated and do not consolidate a political community. I argue that this absence of discussion of suffering in this context is consistent with wider Meskhetian Turkish practices of restraint in the verbal expression of personal feelings and desires. While silence must be examined as a language for expression of pain, absence of commemoration can also be integral to the continual process of living ordinary lives in diaspora. Such continuity is partly obtained through stressing the importance of being a related person. The construction of new kin at marriage occasions the most significant Meskhetian Turkish celebrations, which themselves highlight the value attached to mundane domestic practices constitutive of Meskhetian Turkish persons and households.

Rather than being blamed for their suffering, the Soviet Union is celebrated, and its disappearance provides the basis for acceptable public expression of loss. But neither the positive affiliation with a state, nor village association as a form of relatedness, rely on identification with a physical place. The thesis thus questions the assumption of refugees' and others' territorial identification.

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Note on Language

My informants speak a form of Turkish which I call 'Meskhetian Turkish.' It has its roots in Anatolian Turkish, but the experience of living in Soviet Georgia, Uzbekistan, and now Russia, plus the avoidance of Atatürk's Turkish language reform, means that Meskhetian Turkish differs in grammar and accent from 'Istanbul Turkish.' For example, Meskhetian Turks use the verb endings *-maya* and *-mah* interchangeably for the infinitive, whereas in Turkish the infinitive ends in *-mak* or *-mek*, and *-maya*, *-meye* are used only according to specific grammatical rules. My usage is based on Meskhetian Turkish speech as heard and is therefore not always consistent. The Meskhetian Turkish accent is generally softer than that of Turkish, so I have often recorded as 'h' what would be spelt 'k' in Turkish.

Turkish and Meskhetian Turkish vocabularies also differ. Many words that are obviously based on Russian words have been adapted to become Meskhetian Turkish. The following all use the Meskhetian Turkish verb *etmeye* (to do, make), in addition to a Russian verb or noun.

<i>zvanit etmeye</i>	to phone (from <i>zvanit'</i> (R) to ring)
<i>telefon etmeye</i>	to phone (from noun <i>telefon</i> (R) telephone)
<i>prinimat etmeye</i>	to accept, receive (from <i>prinimat'</i> (R) to accept, receive, take)
<i>priglasht etmeye</i>	to invite (from <i>priglasht'</i> (R) to invite)
<i>peredumat etmeye</i>	to rethink, change one's mind (from <i>peredumat'</i> (R), to change one's mind)
<i>meshat etmeye</i>	to get in the way, bother (from <i>meshat'</i> (R) to mix, stir; <i>pomeshat'</i> (R) to disturb, hinder)

Other words are closer to Azeri than Turkish, in part as a result of the Meskhetian Turks being educated in Azeri from the late 1920s to early 1940s. For example, the verb 'to sew' is *dikmek* in Turkish, but *tikmeh* in Meskhetian Turkish and Azeri. All italicised words are Meskhetian Turkish (MT), unless indicated as (A) Arabic, (R) Russian, (T) Turkish, or (U) Uzbek.

There is no specific Meskhetian Turkish alphabet. Although in the 1920s they were taught using a Latin alphabet (or 'English letters,' as they sometimes describe it), since the 1930s all education has used Georgian or Cyrillic alphabets. The Uzbek alphabet

was Cyrillic¹ while my informants lived in Central Asia, and included a few characters additional to the Russian. Now when writing letters to one another, my informants write Meskhetian Turkish in Cyrillic,² although they use the Turkish Latin alphabet to display couples' names at weddings. Some can also read Arabic letters, although many do not understand the words.

All Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodar speak some Russian, the language of the market, school and work. For some young people, particularly those living in villages with few other Meskhetian Turks, Russian is effectively their first language. On the other hand, many elderly people speak very little Russian, except for the loan words that have been incorporated into Meskhetian Turkish and Uzbek. I have transliterated Russian words into the Latin alphabet using the American Library of Congress system (Brown 1996:11). This system is used for proper names except where an alternative spelling is already familiar (such as Joseph, rather than Iusef, Stalin). For Meskhetian Turkish, I have largely transcribed into the Turkish (Latin) alphabet. This provides a better representation of vowel sounds than would a transliteration from Meskhetian Turkish as written in Cyrillic. Thus some common Turkish words, such as *gelmek*, are transcribed from Meskhetian Turkish in a different form, as in *gelmeh*. Given that there is no standard Meskhetian Turkish dictionary or alphabet, I feel this approach is more appropriate than using the standard Turkish spelling for words with identical meanings. I have also followed this practice in transcription of Meskhetian Turkish names, thus Meskhetian Turkish Cyrillic Iusef is here presented as Yüsüf, when it refers to a Meskhetian Turk.

For readers who are not acquainted with the Turkish alphabet, it may be useful to be aware of the pronunciation of certain letters:

a as in *bat*; sometimes (particularly in personal names) as in *mare*

c as in *jam*.

ç as in *church*

e as in *test*

g as in *goat*

ğ generally very guttural but hardly perceptible 'g,' little more than a lengthening of the preceding vowel

h guttural as in *loch*, or Russian *kh*

i as in *sit*

¹ It is now written in Latin characters.

² Young people often write to one another in Russian.

i as in *but*
ö as in *bird*, but short
o as in *pod*
r slightly rolled
ş as in *sheep*
ü as in German *Lübeck*
u as in *pull*

The remaining letters are pronounced much as would be expected by an English speaker (based on Rona 1998:8-10).

Translation

Occasionally following an initial translation I have retained the original Russian or Meskhetian Turkish in my text. In almost all cases, this occurs when the English translation is long, or when accurate translation is difficult. *Ogorod* (*R*), for example, is sometimes translated as 'kitchen garden.' In most cases this is unhelpful, because it suggests that a non-kitchen garden also exists, which is not usually the case. Although flowers are planted in the *ogorod* occasionally, and around the *dvor* (*R*) ('courtyard,' another difficult translation) more often, the concept of having a garden whose sole purpose is anything but planting crops for consumption or sale is alien to the Meskhetian Turks. While 'allotment' may be preferable, its English usage implies an aspect of leisure-time activity rather than farming for subsistence. In other cases, one word in Russian encompasses a number of meanings in English, such as *gula'* (*R*) (to go for a walk, wander; to have an affair, go flirting; to go out (with)). Furthermore, I have repeatedly used certain words for which translations into English are adequate, but the connotations of the English word are different from that of the Meskhetian Turkish or Russian.

Glossary

aba	mother
abla	brother's wife, uncle's wife
adat	custom, tradition
ahd işte	see <i>nikâh işte</i>
ali alah, ali verah	'we take, we give,' religious betrothal ceremony
aka (U)	(older) brother [pron. eke]
aş	specifically Meskhetian Turkish rice dish
ayah dunumi	bride's parents' visit to her new home, followed by her visit to her old home accompanied by her in-laws
baba	father, grandfather
bacanah	wife's sister's husband
baci	sister, female cousin
bayram	(religious) holiday
beşek	cradle
bibi	father's sister
bohca	gifts for the bride; literally 'things tied up in a cloth'
borc	debt
buyuk baba	grandfather ('big father')
chemodan (R)	suitcase
ciger	relative
dungur	one's child's spouse's relative
duşek	sleeping mattress
elti	husband's brother's wife
emi	father's brother
enişta	bridegroom, son-in-law, man who has married into the family
etmek	bread
gelin	bride, daughter-in-law, young married woman
x-gile (gitmeh)	(to go) to x and the people with whom s/he lives
gitmah, gitmeh	to go
gula' (R)	to go for a walk; to have an affair, go flirting to go out (with)
hala	mother's sister
halva	sweet made of flour, sugar, butter and water
harc	wedding payment
hinkali	boiled dumplings
kasinka (R)	headscarf
katha	bridal headwear

<i>kaynana</i>	mother-in-law
<i>kaynata</i>	father-in-law
<i>krai (R)</i>	region in Russian Federation, similar to county
<i>kesme kesiyir</i>	to fix the date of a wedding (<i>kesmeh</i> to cut)
<i>kız</i>	daughter, girl
<i>küv</i>	village
<i>mantı</i>	steamed dumplings
<i>minder</i>	sitting mattress
<i>misefir</i>	guest
<i>misefire gitmeh</i>	to go visiting
<i>nikâh işte (U)</i>	religious marriage ceremony (also <i>ahd işte</i>)
<i>nişan chemodan</i>	suitcase from the bride's family for the groom
<i>nişandi</i>	betrothed, engaged
<i>nişan etmeye</i>	to betroth; to propose, ask for in marriage
<i>oğlan</i>	son, boy [pron. <i>ola</i> in vocative]
<i>ogorod (R)</i>	allotment, land used by household for growing food
<i>para</i>	money
<i>piala</i>	tea bowl
<i>propiska (R)</i>	residence permit (pl. <i>propiski</i>)
<i>raion (R)</i>	district of <i>krai</i> (see above) in Russian Federation
<i>Ramazan</i>	Muslim fast (Ramadan)
<i>rodnoi (R)</i>	own, related, native, dear
<i>sekü</i>	wooden platform on which people sit and sleep
<i>sharf (R)</i>	scarf, small headscarf
<i>sovkhos (R)</i>	(former) state farm
<i>şennik</i>	people (<i>bizim şennik</i> , our people)
<i>şerbet</i>	syrup, sugared water; betrothal
<i>şerbet içmeye</i>	'to drink syrup,' to betroth
<i>tada</i>	(younger) brother
<i>tavşal</i>	(large) headscarf
<i>tayi</i>	mother's brother
<i>toy</i>	wedding, celebration
<i>utanmah</i>	to be embarrassed, ashamed
<i>vygnať (R)</i>	to drive out (cattle or people)
<i>yenge</i>	godfather's wife, woman who accompanies and assists bride in first few days of marriage
<i>yorhun</i>	bed cover
<i>zandoh</i>	wooden chest, with decorative metal front

Introduction

The Meskhetian Turks are a small Muslim population, numbering approximately 300,000, living scattered across the former Soviet Union and Turkey. Up until the mid-twentieth century, they resided in Meskhetia, on the border between Georgia and Turkey (see appendix: maps). In November 1944 they were deported *en masse* to Central Asia, and resettled in the Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), and have not since been allowed to return to Meskhetia. In 1989 some of the Uzbeks turned on their Meskhetian Turkish neighbours in Fergana, and within a month all those living in this region were evacuated to central Russia. The events precipitated further migration, as most of the Meskhetian Turks in Uzbekistan also left, along with some from other parts of Central Asia. My informants reside in Krasnodar *krai*, a region of southern Russia on the Black Sea, in the western foothills of the Caucasus. Some moved here in the mid-1980s when invited to work for the collective farms, but the majority, arriving after June 1989, have not been welcomed. They continue to suffer hardship due to discrimination by the region's authorities and the local Cossack brigades.

This thesis examines how the Meskhetian Turks have 'resumed the task of living' (Das & Kleinman 2001:3) following the events which led to their displacement, and asks how the experience of those events has been both integrated into and mediated through everyday and life-cycle practices. The thesis draws on, and hopes to influence, the anthropology of post-Soviet peoples, that of refugees, and the anthropology of suffering and memory of suffering. In this introduction I examine these contexts in order to situate the research questions, and describe the conditions of fieldwork in southern Russia.³

Crisis and Survival: post-Soviet Anthropology

According to Tishkov, Russia is a 'huge multiethnic formation [which] remains an inexhaustible reservoir of knowledge' (Tishkov 1992:375). In less dramatic terms it is true that, until its collapse, few British and North American anthropological studies were undertaken in the Soviet Union, Balzer (1981)⁴ Humphrey (1983) and Dragadze (1988) being notable exceptions. Dragadze states,

³ I discuss the anthropology of kinship, as it relates to this thesis, in chapter three.

⁴ Balzer's monograph is based on fieldwork begun in 1976 (Balzer 1999).

'British-style extensive participant observation among Soviet peoples was not only difficult but mostly useless, since it was virtually impossible to publish even the slightest observation without criticising the state or compromising the villagers studied' (in Tishkov 1992:384).

However, Russia has its own rich and extensive anthropological tradition, and one which influenced and has been influenced by state government. But the vast output of Soviet ethnographers rests on different concepts, ethics and methodologies from those of western anthropology.⁵ The lack of (western) anthropology on the Soviet Union is particularly notable in comparison with the smaller but better studied region of Eastern Europe (Hann 1980,1985, Pine 1996, Stewart 1997, Swain 1985, Verdery 1983, among many others). Since the early 1990s, anthropologists from abroad have begun to redress the balance, with the result that Russian academic Tishkov has lamented that as 'foreign anthropologists are increasingly gaining long-awaited access to field research in our country...the number of American anthropology students currently specialising in the Soviet Union exceeds the analogous figure in all our higher-educational institutions' (1992:377).

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russian society has undeniably undergone a period of massive uncertainty and economic poverty. The 'transition' has not produced fully functioning market capitalism and failed to bring substantial material benefits. Wages continue to go unpaid, or are paid only in kind, and prices continue to rise. Much of the anthropology of contemporary Russia and the former Soviet Union focuses on responses to these economic problems, contesting the 'transition' model used by other disciplines and international development institutions. As Pine and Bridger note, 'local history, experience, and memory were being ignored in the grand narratives' (Pine & Bridger 1998:2). As a result, anthropologists have examined and described the 'survival strategies' developed at the local level (Bridger, Kay & Pinnick 1996; Burawoy & Verdery 1999, Kandiyoti & Mandel 1998; Mandel & Humphrey forthcoming; Pine & Bridger 1998).

Bridger, Kay and Pinnick's (1996) study, for example, recounts the economic difficulties faced by Russian citizens in general, and the double burden carried by women in particular. Others examine local reactions to and developments of 'the market' (Humphrey 1999, Mandel & Humphrey forthcoming); or critique the strategies of international development organisations (Mandel 1998, Bruno 1998). In work which

⁵ For discussions of the work of ethnographers, and of the differences between western and Soviet anthropology see Balzer (1992), Eidlitz Kuoljok (1985), Gellner (1988), Humphrey (1984), and Tishkov (1992, 1997); see also chapter one.

resonates with the data of this thesis, the use of household networks, providing labour assistance and loans, as well as access to medical care and education, has been examined (Kandiyoti 1998, Werner 1998). Such work, particularly concerning formalised assistance in the form of rotating credit associations, provides avenues by which to link the experience of former Soviet peoples with others (Ardener & Burman 1995), but also highlights the entertainment as well as practical financial value of such groups (Kandiyoti 1998: 569-576; Werner 1998:609-610).

It is notable, however, that although such local-level analyses do convincingly critique macro-level models of the 'transition,' many, like Walker's account of 'survival strategies' in eastern Ukraine (1998), focus only on their *economic* survival, and fail to address 'survival' beyond ensuring that there is food on the table. Anderson (1998) and Roberts (1998) are exceptions in the growing mass of literature on coping strategies, in that they examine primarily religious responses to the 'upheavals' of the last decade of the twentieth century. For the most part, however, the emotional, spiritual, non-tangible aspects of well-being or 'survival' in post-Soviet circumstances have been largely neglected, suggesting that the research agenda has been set by others than anthropologists (Humphrey & Mandel forthcoming). While insisting on the 'upheaval' of the last decade, few scholars demonstrate how their informants deal with such chaos on anything other than a practical level, despite the recognition that 'sustaining livelihoods can be as much about the reproduction of lifestyles as it is about the physical survival of household members' (Kandiyoti 1998:569).

However, Ries' analysis of responses to the 'crisis' situation of the early 1990s in Moscow is more comprehensive. She identifies genres of litany, including 'complete disintegration' and 'absurd tales,' which her informants regularly narrate, and which 'comfortably (and amusingly) mediate Russian utopian dreams and Russian reality; [and] provide a descriptive frame for absurdity, making it possible to think, act and survive within that absurdity' (Ries 1997:51). Ries notes that most informants are not concerned about the possibility of personal suffering; sharing stories creates exhilaration rather than anxiety (ibid:47). But she also dissects the 'litany' as a historical genre rather than a novelty of the perestroika era, and contends that 'this genre may have helped to perpetuate some of the very social conditions that it decried' (ibid:113). By conversationally reiterating the divide between 'us' and 'them,' the powerful and the (morally positive) powerless, litany 'may have helped to sustain relative powerlessness and alienation from the political process at the same time as it lamented them' (ibid 83).

Grant's analysis of the lives of Sakhalin Nivkhi shares with Ries' work on Moscow both an awareness of the absurdity of early 1990s life, and, more importantly, a view of this period in the context of the Soviet idea that culture can be constructed and reconstructed. *Perestroika* is seen as only the latest 'reconstruction' in a century-long 'series of reconstructions,' which Grant examines by asking to what extent the Nivkhi 'see themselves as being not merely subject to but part of the Soviet Union?' (Grant 1995:8). Thus Ries and Grant examine the survival of the early post-Soviet world not only in terms of economic provision, but by assessing how it affects and is affected by their informants' self-perception and their relationship to the events occurring around them (see also Lemon 1998:27). Yet even for these writers, 'crisis' remains central to their investigations. Overwhelmingly, then, the post-Soviet world is portrayed as something that must be 'survived' rather than enjoyed, grasped, experienced, or simply lived. This is reflected in the titles of collections dedicated to the subject, including *Surviving Post-Socialism* (Pine & Bridger 1998), *Market reforms, social dislocation and survival in post-Soviet Central Asia* (Kandiyoti & Mandel 1998), and *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Post-Socialist World* (Burawoy & Verdery 1999).

But, as Grant has demonstrated, the changes at the end of the 1980s were perceived by many as simply the latest in a series of state alterations of policy. Brown similarly notes that,

'The dissolution of the Soviet Union has clearly created a social, political and economic upheaval. We misread the situation, however, if we slip into thinking of this situation as entirely, qualitatively new or expressly chaotic. The post-Soviet societies are not a chaotic space... They are environments with their own rough logic - their own hierarchies of strategies, habits and priorities' (Brown 1998:627).

My own research demonstrates that the laments told to new-comers on first meeting poorly reflect Meskhetian Turks' daily approach to their circumstances (see chapter one). Journalists and researchers who seek stories of 'crisis' will often find them, but their informants' daily experience of trying conditions may be more mundane. This is not to say that life in post-Soviet Russia is not difficult, nor that Meskhetian Turks do not complain that it is so; only that an assessment of their experience as lives lived in 'crisis' does not do justice to their pragmatic approach and the continuity of daily practice found among them. This thesis examines both how Meskhetian Turks 'survive' in economic and other senses, but also how life is perceived and experienced as continuity rather than crisis.

Crisis in Displacement? The Anthropology of Refugees

'Refugee studies,' which considers forced migrants as a topic of specific interest in the field of migration studies, is a relatively new phenomenon, although it developed from the work of established scholars (Arendt 1967[1961], Colson 1971a, James 1979,1988). It was formalised in the 1980s with the establishment in Oxford of the Queen Elizabeth House Refugee Studies Centre and the Journal of Refugee Studies (Baker 1990, Robinson 1990, Zetter 1988). These innovations intended to encourage inter-disciplinary theoretical advances, in part through avoiding too constraining a definition of a 'refugee.'⁶ Although it is celebrated as a multi-disciplinary field, Harrell-Bond and Voutira state that 'anthropology has most... to offer the study of refugees.' In particular, anthropologists are 'urgently needed to interfere' to act as *cultural brokers* for refugees' perspectives (Harrell-Bond & Voutira 1992:7,8; see also Howell 1982). Further, these authors argue that the discipline itself has much to gain from greater study of refugees, as it offers the chance to examine processes of social change and innovation; the relationship between past and present; and the nature of human suffering.

Despite the recent development of refugee studies, the phenomenon is not a new one; displacement and forced migration have occurred for centuries (Zolberg, Suhrke & Agnayo 1989:5-13). What are relatively new are the international techniques for classifying and dealing with the refugee 'problem.' Harrell-Bond and Voutira state that refugees were born in this century, as the people who did not fit the nationalist principle 'one state - one culture' (1992:6, see also Arendt 1967:267-290, Voutira 1991). Malkki places the development of the refugee concept at the end of World War II, when standardised techniques were developed, from military experience, for managing refugees (Malkki 1995b:497-500).⁷ In the Soviet and pre-Soviet context, Meskhetian Turks and their forbears have been subject to forced migration for the last two

⁶ The (1951) UN 'Convention relating to the Status of Refugees' defines a refugee as anyone who, 'owing to well-founded fears of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.' This definition has been much critiqued, not least for failing to take into account the commonality of experience of forced migrants who do and do not move beyond state boundaries. Although it is unsuitable here to analyse the appropriateness of the UN definition, it should be noted that because they did not cross an international border in 1989, the Meskhetian Turks are not officially refugees. According to Russian Federation law, they were and are citizens of the Soviet state in which they resided in 1991. However, the Krasnodar authorities do not agree with this assessment, as discussed in chapter one.

⁷ It was after WWII that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established, and the UN's definition of refugees developed.

centuries on account of their status as non-nationals, but, in line with Malkki's argument, the 1944 deportation represents an innovation in terms of state organisation and efficiency (see chapter one). Much anthropological work on refugees has focused on such management practices, either in the study of camp refugees (Hinton 1996, Malkki 1995a, Reynell 1989), or of those who become entangled in (western) bureaucratic asylum procedures (Daniel & Knudsen 1995; Graham & Khosravi 1997), although most displaced persons, and particularly internally displaced persons such as the Meskhetian Turks, do not pass through official channels.

One area in which anthropology has positively contributed to refugee studies is in deconstructing the label 'refugee' (Zolberg, Suhrke & Agnayo 1989). Although imputing the cohesiveness of one's informants is a concern for all anthropologists (Brubaker forthcoming), for those forcibly displaced there are additional implications, since labelling, or not labelling, as 'refugees' affects how they are administered and supported by national and international bodies. As Zetter notes, the term refugee 'stereotypes and institutionalises a status' (1988:1). It homogenises a variety of aspiration, skill, and status within the population, denying agency and alternative intent; which thus leads to failure to recognise the various needs and desires of persons of differing ages and genders (Knudsen 1995:20-21, for example). Such homogenisation was seen in Britain's national newspapers at the time of the 'Kosovo crisis' of 1999. Alongside a mass of passport photos of the displaced by which their former professions were listed, a short article asserted that, 'Today, because of the rape of their homeland, they are all the same. They are all penniless, homeless, stateless - and, by and large, hopeless' (Dalrymple 1999:6). Such a portrayal is frequently used to elicit public support by organisations sympathetic to the plight of forcibly displaced 'asylum seekers' in the West.

Anthropologists have demonstrated that forcibly displaced populations contest the label 'refugee' in their self-representation. Shahrani, studying Afghan refugees in Pakistan, demonstrates how this population has avoided such stereotyping, to their advantage (Shahrani 1995). The Afghans describe themselves as *muhajirin* - those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, after suffering oppression. By drawing on Islamic concepts shared by hosts and hosted, a necessary but temporary situation is accepted by both as essential for preserving self-respect and honour of the Afghan nation in the face of communism. Similarly, Peteet demonstrates that Palestinians describe themselves as 'returners' (*al-a'idin*), defining themselves as people seeking to get back to where they come from, rather than defining themselves on the basis of where they are. 'The distinction is one of action. To refer to oneself as a "returner" evokes a

political commitment that underwrites agency. Return is contingent on an active commitment to struggle (*nidal*)' (Peteet 1995:177). These works are important in that not only do they provide a more appropriate, emic, definition of their informants' displaced status, but they also demonstrate that those displaced are not in a state of crisis, but are occupied with building a future, based largely on a continuity of self-perception, strategies and resources present prior to the events which triggered migration.

Elsewhere in refugee studies anthropology's impact has been more ambiguous, particularly in regard to the debates surrounding territoriality and the identification of people with a place. The identification of refugees with their place of origin has been documented by many. Peteet, for example, argues that it is consciousness of place, or more particularly of village, which ties a person to the space of Palestine. 'Palestinians seek return... to a site where the restoration of trust as a cultural basis for everyday life and security is territorialised' (ibid:171). As will become clear in chapter three, Meskhetian Turks also orientate themselves with respect to one another in terms of villages, but, in contrast to the Palestinians, such identification does not depend on place. Place has also been examined in contrast to impersonal 'space,' as in Graham and Khosravi's study of Iranians in Sweden.

'Many Iranians... find themselves in a situation where they must 'perform' as Iranians. They occupy 'space' in Sweden in this way, but cannot inhabit it in a unselfconscious way; it is not a 'place' where they feel at home' (Graham & Khosravi 1997:120; see also Hirschon 1989:26).

The critique of this emphasis on place stems from concerns about 'voluntary repatriation' to the places from which refugees flee, which for several decades has been held by influential international bodies to be the primary 'durable' or desirable 'solution to refugee problems' (Allen & Morsink 1994, Ray 2000:397). Voluntary repatriation is seen to be in the best interests of the refugees themselves, as well as their preferred option. It is seen in terms of 'rights to return,' rights which a CIS conference in 1996 attributed to the Meskhetian Turks:

'Persons belonging to formerly deported people have the right to voluntary return including ensuring transit travel, uninhibited transportation of property which belongs to them and assistance in integrating in their historical homeland' (CISCONF 1996/5, par.21, quoted in Adam n.d.:7).

One of the most influential anthropologists questioning this approach is Liisa Malkki, who undertook fieldwork among Hutus (displaced from Burundi) in towns and camps in Tanzania (Malkki 1995a). Her oft (mis-) quoted critique of the 'national order of things' has two main strands. On the one hand, she criticises 'the assumption that state sovereignty as we know it at the close of the twentieth century is part of a natural or necessary order of things' (Malkki 1995b:511), showing that such an order displaces those who do not fit the nationalist principle of one people, one state (Gellner 1983, Hobsbawn 1992). Secondly, she indicates the questionable nature of the assumption that 'to become uprooted and removed from a national community is automatically to lose one's identity, traditions, and culture' (Malkki 1995b:508; see also Malkki 1992).

Malkki's approach has been developed and critiqued in two directions. On the one hand, those such as Warner argue that place is not significant in situating oneself, as in his statement that, 'It is the relations with other people that ground man in his existence, and not the physical grounding of the individual and group with a given space' (Warner 1994:165). Others, including Kibreab, argue while territory remains the main repository of rights and membership, 'deterritorialization of identity [is] impossible' (Kibreab 1999). The debate in part reflects the contrast between those researchers who feel a responsibility for challenging the status quo of the refugee regime, as do Malkki (1995b) and Ranger (1994); and those who see it as nonsensical not to face reality:

'At a time when spaces are more territorialized than ever before, to speak of deterritorialization of identity does not make sense. There can be no deterritorialized identity in a territorialized space' (Kibreab 1999:387).

In part, the distinction between these two positions stems from a confusion and lack of clarity over what is 'identity' (Gleason 1983, Hall 1996, Handler 1994). Brubaker and Cooper have shown 'identity' to be analytically problematic, covering as it does a variety of concepts from 'self-understanding' to 'connectedness' or 'groupness' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000). These problems are evident in the debate over the role of place, in that while Warner seems to refer to 'self-understanding' when he uses the term 'identity,' Kibreab is also, if not exclusively, concerned with how other entities 'identify' the people in question.⁸ Yet the various positions in the 'territoriality debate'

⁸ The difficulty sedentary scholars have had in understanding non-territorialised peoples dates back to Herodotus, born 480 BC, whose affiliation with land and towns made him unable to comprehend the nomadic Scythians. According to Hartog, Herodotus could only conceive of the Scythians, in a positive sense, by asserting that their nomadism was a commendable *strategy* for successful warfare (Hartog 1988:202).

are not completely erased by use of other terms for 'identity.' The role of territoriality for both Meskhetian Turks and for influential others is examined in this thesis.

Associated with the interest in territoriality are examinations of the distinction between home and homeland (for example, Czegledy 1997:476, Graham & Khosravi 1997:131, Malkki 1995b:509, Waatjen 1999). Ray has applied such an analysis to the Meskhetian Turks in Azerbaijan, concluding that they 'do not proclaim a collectivity that is distinctly nationalist and their sense of homeland is often not laden with naturalistic, biological and moral imageries,' (Ray 2000:400), and that 'home is a safe, everyday lived experience that should not be bound exclusively to one place' (ibid.402). Associated with this emphasis on home and homeland, it is notable that a large number of studies concentrate particularly on displaced persons' construction or reconstruction of national or ethnic 'identities' (for example, Czegledy 1997, Eastmond 1998, Malkki 1995a).

One significant problem with the anthropological emphasis on aspects of territoriality is that it does not accurately reflect the daily life and concerns of our informants. As noted by Eastmond, who herself focuses on nationalist discourses and the construction of difference,

'An overriding concern for most adults has been and remains the 'normalization' of everyday life, associated with recovering some stability and predictability in social and economic life and including regaining other (such as professional) social identities, suspended or lost by the war'(Eastmond 1998:174).

This is not to say that many refugees are not concerned with (re)building a communal connectedness; indeed, alongside researchers, displaced people also essentialise 'homeland,' for example (Eastmond 1998:179). But, certainly among the Meskhetian Turks and, I suggest, among many other people, political presentation of group cohesion or even personal discussions of 'who we are,' are of relatively small concern during life following forced migration. As Loizos notes in reference to the work of Hirschon (1989) and Pattie (1997), there is a 'preference for the concrete, the personal, the local over the more all-embracing but impersonal and non-localised project of 'preserving the nation' (Loizos 1999:250).

The emphasis on studying who they (and others) think they are stems ultimately from the perspective which assumes flight *per se* to be deeply disruptive to a person's sense of self and social location. It draws on a view of movement or change as 'crisis,' rather than as a strategy drawn from other cultural practices. Kilis, for example, in his

examination of the migration patterns of Latvians to, from and within Siberia in the past century and a half, describes such movements as 'crises,' and worries over the disturbing of the 'demographic balance' within a village, as a result of the out-migration of young men and women (1999:141-144). Yet the remainder of his thesis gives no indication as to how the lack of youthful residents affected village life other than in residence patterns, and indeed he argues that not to migrate is as much of a positive choice as is migration (ibid:89), indicating that movement has long been a norm among his informants. Other populations termed 'refugees' by international bodies include persons who have migrated at other times for other reasons, and now find their plans hindered or aided by the structures established to deal with the 'refugee problem' (Bakewell 2000).

Ranger reminds us of an important responsibility when he states that, 'there is nothing more important than research on refugees... except to ensure that such research does not compound [their] plight... by cutting them off from the social history of rural people in general' (Ranger 1994:279). As Bakewell notes of Angolans in Zambia, although many describe themselves as refugees in the past tense, having ceased to receive aid and refused to move to the camps, they and other villagers see no clear distinction between themselves, irrespective of their official documents. 'From the perspective of many of the villagers, there are now no refugees and there will be no repatriation' (Bakewell 2000:362, 370). Similarly, among Mozambicans, migrations are made to make the best of a difficult situation, with the result that in long-term war zones there may be little difference between returnee, refugee, migrant and those who stayed (Allen & Morsink 1994:6). Here lies the problem with examining the experience of refugees as that of liminality (Harrell-Bond & Voutira 1992:8, Malkki 1992:34), in that such an approach assumes both an end-point to the experience, but also, more significantly, that displaced life bears no relation to 'normal' life as experienced prior to displacement. Refugee-hood is a short-term emergency, a crisis event, for the aid workers and journalists flown in to deal with the problem, but for many displaced persons it is 'part of the ongoing business of gaining a living in trying circumstances' (Allen & Morsink 1994:7).

The research emphasis on place and identification has also led to a neglect of other aspects of the refugee experience. When Warner states that 'we are all refugees,' referring to global mobility and a sense of non-physical 'homelessness,' he forgets that what distinguishes *forced* migration is not movement or territorial identification, but the terror that instigates flight (Warner 1994:168). Most of us never experience such trauma, although many of us do move around, or feel dislocated even without

movement. While psychologists working with refugees have often demonstrated an interest in how the displaced integrate traumatic experiences into lives in diaspora (Farwell 2001, Rousseau et al 1998, Young 2001, for example), anthropologists working on refugee issues have rarely included the insights of anthropological work on violence, suffering, and memory, which has been undertaken largely among those who stay rather than flee. Davis (1992) and Knudsen (1991) are notable exceptions. I hope to address this lacuna, in examining how the suffering and social relations that led to Meskhetian Turks' flight from Uzbekistan are reflected in their lives in Krasnodar.

Suffering and Memory of Suffering

Some people do react to traumatic events with 'crisis,' by acting in contradiction to established norms. Das' discussion of Shanti, a Sikh woman whose husband and three sons were burnt to death by Hindus, demonstrates such a case (Das 1990b). The young woman alternatively blamed herself, her husband and her daughters for her sons' death, and, after refusing to recognise the needs of her surviving children, committed suicide. But Shanti's act occurred despite culturally appropriate attempts on the part of her mother, husband's father, daughters and neighbours, to help her return to some kind of normality. Her story is notable because it is exceptional. Most young women who lost their husbands in these riots were remarried by their in-laws; and older widows adapted their traditional mourning role to play a political part in repaying the debt to the dead (Das 1990b:368-375).

As Davis notes, in most cases people react to trauma and extraordinary events by making an 'immense effort to preserve what they can of their culture and way of life' (Davis 1992:155). Loizos, whose previous work with his Greek Cypriot relatives enabled him to write a comprehensive and sympathetic account of their displacement soon after it occurred in 1974, similarly states, following Marris, that 'the impulse to preserve the thread of continuity is... a crucial instinct of survival' (Loizos 1981:197, quoting Marris 1974:17). The continuity in question includes the maintenance of wedding payments (De Berry 1999) and wedding practices (Loizos 1981:168-170); bringing up and educating children (Das 1990b:364; Reynell 1989:164-173), and reorganising the family (Kanapathipillai 1990:343). Additionally, existing practices for dealing with pain and suffering are frequently extended to cope with new events (Loizos 1981:198-201; Firth 1959 quoted in Davis 1992:155). It is partly in this sense that Davis insists that 'suffering is normal,' in as much as 'hurricanes and plagues, famines and earthquakes, wars and floods are continuous with the private pains of love

or bereavement and with the more public ones of unemployment or explosions or exploitation' (Davis 1992:150).

Examining the everyday has thus in some cases provided insights into extraordinary experiences. Colson, for example, analyses Tongan emotions of fear and anger in order to understand their behaviour when faced with danger (Colson 1971b). And in seeking to understand collective violence in Sri Lanka, Spencer examines everyday violence, and finds that in both cases aggression occurs when the valued restraint found in everyday interactions breaks down (Spencer 1990). In a similar manner, this thesis examines everyday reactions to suffering, in order to illuminate Meskhetian Turkish responses to the exceptional suffering of 1989 and 1944.

At the same time as recognising the role of continuity, we must be aware that traumatic events, whether or not they lead to flight, are experienced, and usually remembered, as extraordinary. Based on her work with the descendants of Asia Minor Greeks evicted from Turkey in the early twentieth century, Hirschon states that,

'The importance of shared memories for any uprooted group is obvious: in order to reconstitute their lives memory becomes a critical link, the means of a cultural survival, a kind of capital without which their identity would be lost' (Hirschon 1989:15).

Although Hirschon convincingly explains the role of the Greek Orthodox Church in emphasising the potency of memory and the authority of tradition, thus providing a framework for recollection (ibid:16), the 'obvious' nature of the role of shared memories is questionable, as other scholars have demonstrated. Watson's collection of work on memory under state socialism, for example, illustrates that official history sometimes prevents the expression of 'unsanctioned remembrance' (Watson 1994, see also Merridale 2000, Skultans 1998:51); while Karakasidou demonstrates that collective memories (whether or not associated with state pressure) can contradict individual accounts and lead to fear of expressing one's personal memories (1997:126-131). Thus shared memory does not always have a positive role to play for either migrants or others, and, as will be shown in this thesis, this is also the case for Meskhetian Turks.

But while Watson and her collaborators rightly question assumptions about the shared nature of memory, they also set up a questionable opposition between official and personal memory, creating the impression that one is either with the state or against it. Although the complex nature of the relationship between the dominated and the

dominating has been recognised (Humphrey 1994), the danger remains that oppositional activities become reified, and that the active and passive participation of ordinary people in the official Soviet state project (Hellbeck 2000; cf. Verdery 1992:10) goes unexamined. Understanding how and why this occurred remains as important as identifying the spaces that existed for unofficial, unsanctioned memory and opposition, particularly in understanding the experiences of those, like the Meskhetian Turks, who now positively identify with the experience of Communism.

Furthermore, distinctions between 'official' and 'unofficial' collective pasts, or between personal, family and communal memories (Halbwachs 1992, Killis 1999), are problematic. Where does one draw the boundaries between one 'type' of memory and another? As Bloch has shown, the character of one's memory of events of one's lifetime (autobiographical memory) may not be dissimilar from that of one's knowledge of more distant past events (semantic historical memory). He reports that children, not yet born during the 1947 rebellion in Madagascar, speak of what 'we' did at that time, when present at the site where their parents hid (Bloch 1998b). Although not all peoples do or can use the physical landscape to prompt remembrance, this example encourages us to examine how memories of events are, or are not, recalled by those who were not present, and to question where such memories lie in the schema that divides personal, family and communal memories.

This is not to say that there is no distinction between what a person experiences at or after an event, and what she or her community later 'recalls,' and nor that what is said about a past event in any one account equates with what is remembered (Bloch 1998a). As Kirmayer has shown, remembering and forgetting are social acts, partially explicable psychologically, but significantly influenced by the social context in which they later may or may not be recalled (Kirmayer 1996). In cases where particularly traumatic events have not been communally recognised as such, narrative memories may not circulate even in intimate settings. But whether the verbal expression of memory is restricted by state pressure, communal discouragement or personal unwillingness to remember in narrative, remembering also occurs in other ways (Bloch 1998a:110, Stewart n.d.). As Kirmayer states,

'We are unable to remember the details of most of what we have lived through, although these events have surely formed us. There is much that we commemorate through our accent, posture habits of thought and gesture - things we may be unaware of and forever unable to describe except in vague, abstract or second-hand terms' (1996:177; cf. Connerton 1989, Mauss 1973[1935]).

Referring to conditions under which memories of suffering are not collectively aired or celebrated, Das and Kleinman note that,

'One may ask, though, if communities ever heal such wounds, or are the memories simply buried for one or two generations, until such time as the perspectives and experiences of those living through the shadow of death can be articulated?... But [ethnographers] also need to watch against the tendency to assume that stories that are lying dormant in the time of the fathers will *inevitably* come alive in the time of the sons' (Das & Kleinman 2001:15).

They thus highlight what should be one of the most pressing concerns of those who study suffering and the memory of suffering: the danger that our own assumptions about either the particular trauma or memory in general, will distort our representation of our informants' responses to their pasts. This is particularly true when examining peoples who have experienced Soviet, especially Stalinist, repression. In this sense the Meskhetian Turkish experience is particularly interesting. As I show in chapter one, despite numerous journalistic accounts that assert the primacy of the experience of displacement for the Meskhetian Turks' self perception and present existence, in practice the events of 1989 and 1944 are rarely discussed, and are not commemorated. Additionally, the Soviet regime, rather than being blamed for their suffering in either case is explicitly celebrated. The thesis addresses why this may be so (chapter six).

A further danger inherent in writing about those who have undergone painful experience is that our writings may lead to further trauma. As Dragadze states,

'Your work risks having dire consequences, when you see that writings of a single scholar, which catch the eye of opportunistic political authorities, can lead to disaster, and there are many examples. So you require the sense of realism needed to insist adamantly that your own approach be taken into consideration not alone, but in conjunction with that of colleagues. Otherwise, perhaps the whole venture is too perilous' (Dragadze 2001:1065).

Spencer similarly insists that anthropologists recognise the partial nature of their knowledge (Spencer 1990:621), while Das notes that 'to be the scribe of human suffering creates a special responsibility towards those who suffer' (Das 1990a:33). Notably Dragadze herself turned to writing literary fiction in order to have 'something to

say' about the Rwandan genocide, as she felt unable 'to pursue genocide studies with the confidence and authority that a real scholar ought to possess' (2001:1066). Again, this is pertinent to the Meskhetian Turks, since their continued presence in Krasnodar is far from assured, and Russian encouragement of the present Council of Europe pressure on Georgia to arrange for 'repatriation' makes it less so.

Fieldwork in Krasnodar

Not only can writing be damaging; the very presence of a foreign researcher makes the community visible in ways which may not be beneficial to one's informants. Although to the best of my knowledge my presence did not lead to adverse official interest in my informants, the concern that it might did influence my fieldwork in southern Russia. Following a preparatory trip in March and April 1999, I returned to Russia to undertake fieldwork in September 1999. Although fieldwork in Russia does not require official permission, my stay was sponsored by the History faculty of Kuban State University (KGU), headed by Ruslan Mikhailovich Achagu, and I was hosted in Krasnodar city by a lecturer in the faculty, Igor' Valerovich Kuznetsov. A Meskhetian Turkish family willing to be my hosts was identified through one of Kuznetsov's students, a saw-mill owner in Apsheronsk *raion*, and I moved to the village, here named Oktiabr'skii, in October 1999. I remained based there, with considerable time spent in the neighbouring district of Belorechensk, until November 2000⁹ (see appendix: map c).

My choice of fieldsite, and methods of research, were significantly affected by the region's political circumstances. At a regional level, following the kidnap and murder of British and New Zealand engineers in Chechnia in late 1998, it was felt, at least by NGO workers in neighbouring Stavropol, that any foreign researcher's presence should be kept quiet¹⁰ (see appendix: map b). More influential was the fact that the presence of Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodar is a matter of discontent for the local authorities. As I discuss in chapter one, the Meskhetian Turks here are subject to official discrimination and negative propaganda. Shortly before my arrival, the Deputy Governor of the region refused permission for a survey of Meskhetian Turks to be carried out by students and academics of Stavropol University, supported by the Danish Refugee Council (Tom

⁹ I returned Britain for a month in May 2000, which was planned in order to renew my visa, since the maximum period issued is usually a year, and I planned to be in Russia for longer than this. Three days before returning to London I learnt that I could renew my visa without leaving Russia, but my flights, insurance and other plans required that I return anyway.

¹⁰ Concern about these events led me to undertake the preliminary field trip to Russia in March and April 1999. I had planned to examine the experience of another twice displaced population, the Ingush, in Stavropol *krai*. Following advice received on this trip I concluded that it would be wiser to alter my research interests.

Trier, personal communication; Ryazantsev & Trier 1999). In May 2000, the regional newspaper *Kubanskii Novostii*, ran an article in which the region's Governor declared that English journalists are responsible for the regions 'nationality problems,' not least those concerning the Meskhetian Turks.¹¹ A July edition of *The Moscow Times*, Moscow's free English-language daily, contained three articles about the Meskhetian Turks by Michael Slackman, an American journalist for Newsday, who, earlier in the year, had visited Krasnodar and met some of the region's Cossack *atamans* (leaders). He was taken by them to a meeting of fifty angry Cossacks, who suggested that he was working for the CIA and accused the western world of conspiring with the Turks against Krasnodar's Slavic people. Vitriolic speeches against the Meskhetian Turks followed, and before leaving Slackman was told, 'Excuse me that you were not beaten!' (Slackman 2000).¹² Later a French journalist, with OSCE identification papers, was arrested on leaving the Krymsk offices of the Meskhetian Turkish organisation, Vatan, and held for some hours.

Awareness of such events encouraged me to limit my contact with official bodies. Although all persons in Russia are required to register their presence with the local Administration within three days of arrival, in order to avoid bringing the attentions of the local authorities upon myself and my hosts in Apsheronsk I was only registered as living in a University hostel in Krasnodar city. Apsheronsk district, although having fewer Meskhetian Turkish residents than the areas to the west of Krasnodar town, was chosen for a fieldsite in order to avoid places of intensive police interrogation of Meskhetian Turks, so that my own documents would not be questioned, or my research jeopardised by the local authorities' denial of permission to stay in the district.¹³ In August 2000 I was invited to attend an academic conference on 'Social Organisation and Normal Rights.' Despite the organiser having driven a considerable distance to make the invitation, I apologised that I did not want to discuss my work-in-progress research data. I later heard that a colleague who presented a paper on the Meskhetian Turks, in which actions of the Krymsk police were mentioned, was later required to apologise, following the arrival of an FSB (secret services) officer. I was relieved not to have attended.

Such concerns prohibited any district or regional archival research, as requests for documents concerning the Meskhetian Turks would have prompted questions

¹¹ I was told of this article by several of my informants, but was unable to obtain a copy.

¹² I was given a copy of this article by friends in Moscow in August 2000.

¹³ I experienced no problems in Apsheronsk, although I would be surprised if the Administration was not aware of the presence of a British woman in the district, particularly following my visit to the local secondary school, and the considerable number of photographs I had developed at the photographic studio.

regarding my presence in the *krai*.¹⁴ I similarly did not attempt to interview officials in Apsheronk or elsewhere. For similar reasons, I avoided methods of research that may have made my presence (as a researcher, as opposed to as a village resident) obvious, including household surveys and interviews of other village residents, other than conversations held, for example, in the course of buying bread, waiting for the village meeting to start, or visiting a neighbour to buy cucumbers. I must emphasize that I noticed no antagonism towards my informants on the part of other local inhabitants during my fieldwork, but could not be certain of their attitudes were I to have been more active in eliciting information.

I also avoided contact with the leaders of the Meskhetian Turkish organisation, Vatan. While Krasnodar's branch of Vatan is based in Krymsk, it has members across the *krai*, one of whom I visited with colleagues from the Kuban State University in September 1999. Most other published literature concerning the Meskhetian Turks foregrounds their political organisation, including academic analyses by Adam (n.d.), Aslan (1996), Aydingün (2001), Ossipov (2000), Ossipov & Cherepova (1996), Ray (2000) and Yunusov (2000); and NGO reports, including Forced Migration Projects (1998), Laczko (1998) for the International Organisation for Migration; and Li Rosi et al (1997) and UNHCR (1999), for UNHCR. Thus both in order to avoid undue attention, and to examine aspects of the Meskhetian Turks' experience not previously covered, I decided to focus on those not involved in Vatan. In hindsight this seems a correct decision, given the dismissive comments made about such people by my informants ('Leaders? We have lots of leaders!'), and the lack of fit between Vatan's international aim of return to Georgia, and my informants' relative lack of interest in this cause (see chapter six).

I therefore chose to proceed by integrating myself as far as possible into a Meskhetian Turkish household. I was hosted by a family of six, sharing a two roomed house. After the initial couple of months of adjustment, my hosts accepted my role as that of an unmarried daughter, and allowed (and expected) me to participate in the household's labour (see chapter two). Although during my latter period in the field I travelled fairly frequently, and alone, to visit other Meskhetian Turks in Apsheronk, Belorechensk, and Abinsk regions of Krasnodar, and to Sal'sk in Rostov *oblast'*, my hosts in these places were always relatives of other informants. In so doing I both followed the Meskhetian Turkish practice of only visiting relatives (see chapter three), but was also

¹⁴ A *krai* is a region of Russia, which roughly translates as 'county.' A *krai* or *oblast'* (another type of region) is usually named after the region's major city. A *raion* is a district within a *krai* or *oblast'*, and so usually named after the local town. Unless otherwise stated, 'Krasnodar' refers to the region rather than the town; similarly I will stipulate 'Apsheronk town' if Apsheronk is not to be read as referring to the district (*raion*).

accepted as a pseudo-relative. This was enhanced by wearing a headscarf in all other locations than Oktiabr'skii, despite having stated that I was unmarried.

My integration as a young woman in this community, in which labour and sociable activities are often segregated by gender, necessarily meant that more of my time and conversations were held with other women. Although I probably spoke with as many men as women, my relations with the former were not as relaxed or frequent. I also did not examine the Meskhetian Turk's religious practices in detail. Partly this stemmed from an awareness of Islam as integrated into daily life, and that attempting to distinguish and define Islamic practices from other Meskhetian Turkish approaches would be artificial. However, given my age and gender, I also spent little time with the community's elderly men. It is largely, although not exclusively, old men who commit time to specifically Muslim practice and prayer.

My interaction with older people was also affected by language restrictions. Before fieldwork, I participated in a year of SSEES's MA Russian language course, and received some individual tuition in Turkish from Gülnur Akturan. Among my informants it was expected that I would, and should, speak Russian.¹⁵ Within about three months in the field my Russian was relatively fluent, and I began to actively focus on learning Meskhetian Turkish. My first attempts to speak were met with laughter, not so much at my accent but at the idea that I should want to speak Meskhetian Turkish. Some of those who met me later in my fieldwork period, particularly once I regularly covered my head (and thus was, in some situations, presumed to be a Meskhetian Turk), were less derisive and encouraged my proficiency in their language. By the time I left the field I effectively understood all conversations in Meskhetian Turkish, and although I told them as much, some people did not take in the implications of this. As a result I understood conversations that were thought to be accessible only to members of the household in question.

I did not use a tape recorder during my research, largely because I encouraged an informal relationship with my informants and did not want to formalise it through taped interviews. Given my labouring obligations within the household, the communal nature of my accommodation, and the limited hours of electricity,¹⁶ I would have been unable

¹⁵ After my partner visited the village in January 2000, I repeatedly heard it exclaimed that, 'He can't speak Russian!' My informants refused to accept that he had no need to speak Russian, which they see as *the* international form of communication.

¹⁶ Apparently for 'economisation,' or because too many people had not paid for their electricity, during most of my stay in Apsheron'sk the electricity was switched off three times a day for a couple of hours each time. Although these times could usually be predicted, inclement weather or other unknown reasons sometimes extended these periods. This caused further

to transcribe interviews in the field. On a few occasions senior men demanded that I interview them, but for the most part I asked multiple questions when events or conversations were of particular interest. In order for me to ascertain kinship terminology and relations, several informants helped to draw diagrams of their kin¹⁷. I attended as many marriage-related events as possible, both because weddings were obviously the highlight of Meskhetian Turkish life, but also for the increased range of informants present.

Carsten describes the discomfort of her 'coercive incorporation' in a Langkawi Malay village, including being sent out as male visitors arrived, and being looked at as she slept.

'I have vivid memories of long hours spent minding a sleeping baby when all the adults of the house seemed to have vanished; the heat and the tiredness from washing my own and other clothes at the well; a particularly trying (and tearful) afternoon spent seeding dried chillis the day before I left the village in 1982' (Carsten 1997:277).

Other than the tears which I was not allowed (see chapter five), Carsten's experience of fieldwork resonates with my own. I was 'encouraged' to visit particular people when I did not wish to; summoned to weed sweetcorn plants early on a hot Saturday morning; and constantly asked where I was going or where I had been. But this integration had positive results, in that I soon ceased to be treated as a Russian or other non-Meskhetian Turkish guest, and my participation in events, such as the Ramazan fast, was accepted, despite my lack of religion. A highlight of my trusted status came when the daughters of three households that I knew well were given in marriage, and I was able to participate in all wedding related events as a member of the household concerned.¹⁸

inconvenience as the water was not pumped to the tap while there was no electricity. Although households stored water in barrels, a day without electricity necessitated repeated trips with buckets to the well at the entrance to the village.

¹⁷ I use 'kin' and 'relative' interchangeably, as translations of *ciger* and *rodsvennik* (R). See chapter three for a discussion of this usage.

¹⁸ The importance of my camera should not be underestimated: I was additionally invited as I would provide a record of the events.

The Thesis

In order to question the impression of 'crisis' found in much of the anthropological literature on refugees and post-Soviet peoples, when entering the field I aimed to examine how the Meskhetian Turks maintained the continuity of normal lives. By 'normal' in this context I refer less to the concept identified by Rausig among her rural Estonian informants, where normal 'represented the imaginary good and ordinary' (Rausig forthcoming). Rather, I follow Ries' perception that, 'Life is not normal in the sense of being easy or calm, but in many ways it seems to have achieved the level of the mundane: routine and predictable' (Ries 1997:163). This approach is seen in chapters two, three and four, in which I document everyday life and leisure activities, as well as the continuity of life through maintaining and constructing kin.

However, although displacement is rarely spoken of, the Meskhetian Turks' historical experience of hardship is evidenced in daily and celebratory practices, and in their perceptions of their future. The writing of the thesis has entailed an awareness that, 'While everyday life is seen as the site of the ordinary, this ordinariness is itself recovered in the face of the most recalcitrant of tragedies: it is the site of many buried memories and experiences' (Das & Kleinman 2001:4). Thus I have asked, what reflections of the events of 1989 and 1944 are found in my informants' daily lives? Why is the experience of displacement rarely explicitly discussed or commemorated? And how do reactions to the trauma of forced migration relate to wider Meskhetian Turkish practices of suffering?

Chapter one situates the Meskhetian Turks historically, and introduces their (limited) discourses on displacement. In chapter two I discuss daily life, illustrating the autonomous economic role of the household and the significance of village non-kin in daily economic life. Chapter three examines what it means to be related in Meskhetian Turkish terms, and includes discussion of the Georgian village as a category of kin. In the following chapter, I examine the ways in which new kin are created through birth, circumcision, and most importantly marriage, indicating that it is groups rather than individuals that are central to such arrangements. Chapter five is an examination of Meskhetian Turkish responses to death and suffering generally, including the absence of expression of emotion on the part of young brides, and a discussion of silence as a discourse of suffering. In chapter six I discuss the passing of the Soviet Union as a legitimate focus for complaint, and demonstrate the extent to which Meskhetian Turks act and perceive of themselves as Soviets. Finally, the conclusion assesses the

continuity of Meskhetian Turkish suffering and responses to suffering, and considers whether breaking our informants' silences about their pain is appropriate.

For the reasons discussed above, for their safety I have changed the personal names of all of my informants. The *kūv* names, drawn from villages in Georgia (see chapter three, and appendix: map d), used in the thesis are authentic: the names used are names of villages in Meskhetia; but they are not those of the informants who discuss them. I have similarly given my host village a new name, Oktiabr'skii, and have altered the names of other Russian villages, although I have retained the names of regional towns.

1. Displacement and Self-Perception

Two days after arriving in Oktiabr'skii, I went with my host to visit relatives in a nearby village. Following supper and the evening prayer, seventy-year-old Hasim and his son sat down with me in the back room, where we were joined by some of the children who were quiet for the first time all evening.

Hasim speaks little Russian, so told his son to translate while he told me the history of the Meskhetian Turks. He said that during the time of Stalin, during the war, in 1944 all the Meskhetian Turks were taken in wagons to central Asia - to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Siberia. There they lived, but in a very different climate, until the Fergana events of 1989. Telling me that most Meskhetian Turks then left, many to Russia, Hasim's son described their contemporary problems of life without *propiski* (residence permits), adding that they do not have 'human rights.' This, he insisted, would not happen in the USA, or in England, or even in Brazil. He was insistent that I should write a book, so that all the world knows this story. He then stood up, said good night, and left.

On our first meeting, most Meskhetian Turks told a shortened version of Hasim's story, often only a few words, ensuring that I knew of their former residence in, and forced migration from, Georgia and Uzbekistan; and that, 'We have no homeland.' Usually the conversation swiftly moved on to discuss the potato harvest, or the amount of money spent by a bride's father. Thereafter the events of 1944 or 1989 were rarely discussed, neither among themselves in Meskhetian Turkish nor with me or others in Russian.¹⁹ The extent to which these events are not fore-grounded in everyday life was illustrated when sixteen-year old Güzel told of a recent history lesson, in which her Russian teacher talked about the Meskhetian Turks:

Only when the teacher mentioned Fergana did Güzel realise that she was talking about *them*. At home she asked her mother whether they were *Meskhetian* Turks, as she had not known that this was their name. Relating the teacher's words, Güzel still talked about the Meskhetian Turks in the third person. She said that Stalin, in some year, had had all the Meskhetian Turks loaded into train wagons, 'but not the passenger wagons; the ones without seats, for goods; the narrow ones.' Several families were in each one, and the doors were locked. When the train stopped 'the guards did not even open the doors to let in fresh air. Lots of

¹⁹ Kilis reports that, although they remember them, Latvians in Siberia similarly do not talk about the Repressions of the 1930s (Kilis 1999:13).

people died, and they threw the bodies out of the train, not knowing where to bury their relatives.' Then when they got to Central Asia 'life was very bad.' And then in 1989 the Uzbeks 'started throwing them out.'²⁰ Güzel said she almost cried when the teacher was telling the story.

In this chapter I expand on these stories, and contextualise them, in relation to the wider history of the region of the Caucasus known as Meskhetia, the Soviet definition and movement of peoples, and other peoples' experience of collective violence. I begin to examine how the Meskhetian Turks perceive and represent themselves and their experiences of the past century, and how Güzel's lack of communal historical knowledge relates to these self-perceptions.

Origins

Meskhetia is a region of mountainous south-western Georgia, bordering Turkey and Armenia, and separated from the Black Sea by the Republic of Adzharia (see appendix: maps b and d). 'Meskhetia,' as my informants use the term, refers to the regions of Meskheta and Dzhavakheti, also known as the Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki districts after the area's major towns. The term 'Meskhetia' derives from 'Meskhs,' the name of a people resident in what is now Georgia in first century AD, and probably long before then. Rosen, who refers to them as the Mushki tribe, asserts that one of their kings, called Mita, was 'none other than the famous King Midas of the golden touch,' whose empire was destroyed by invading Cimmerians in 696-5 BC (Rosen 1991:16-17). The Meskhs/Mushki are also referred to in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 38:1-4), as the Meshech or Mosokh (op cit; Aslan 1996:5). Some writers describe the Meskhs as a Georgian tribe, and hence assert that they formed the (Georgian) basis of the present day Meskhetians (Chavchavadze in Aslan 1996, Gachechiladze 1995, Rosen 1991). However, the area known in the first century AD as Samtskhe (from *Sa-meskhe*, 'country of Meskhs') (Yunusov 2000:10), and later as Meskhetia, has, in the intervening two millennia, been the place of settlement (by invitation and invasion) of multiple others, many of them Turkic peoples from Central Asia.²¹

²⁰ The teacher also said that most of the Meskhetian Turks now live in Belgorod (a region of Russia close to the Ukraine), many with *propiski* and 'human rights.' The teacher had asked Jakob, Güzel's cousin, to talk about rights mentioning respect for one's elders. Jakob did not initially understand why she had called on him: he also did not know that he was a 'Meskhetian Turk.'

²¹ For a detailed summary of these migrations written from a Turkic (Azerbaijani) perspective see Yunusov (2000:10-19); Gachechiladze (1995) and Rosen (1991) provide the Georgian perspective.

The interaction between Georgian and Turkic peoples, and the contrast between representations of Georgian history, is demonstrated by descriptions of the reign of the Georgian king David the Builder in the twelfth century. From a Georgian perspective, during this period Meskheta 'became the centre of Georgian culture and power,' as David '[drove] the Turks... out of Kvemo Kartli, Tblisi, and Tao' (Rosen 1991:201). This picture is clarified, or confused, by Yunusov's pro-Turkic explanation that the Turks in question, the Muslim Oguz, were only driven out with the considerable assistance of the Qipchaks, who made up 50,000 of David's 60,000-strong army. The Qipchaks were also Turkic, although Christian. In order to defeat the Oguz, David invited them to live in Georgia, and married the daughter of their leader (Yunusov 2000:14-15).

Thus hundreds of thousands of Oguz and Qipchaks, and other Mongol and Turkic invaders, had settled in Meskheta by the thirteenth century, from which time its main town, Akhaltsikh, is mentioned in sources by the Turkish name Ak-sika, or 'White Fortress,' a literal translation of the Georgian name. This accounts for the present day Turkish designation of the region as Ahıska, and of my informants as Ahıska Türkleri. At this time even in Georgian texts the local leaders were given the Turkish title *Atabek*, from which came the fifteenth century name of one of the four kingdoms of what had been Georgia, Samtskhe Saatabago, 'the land of the Atabek called Samtskhe [Meskheta]' (Yunusov 2000:15).

The most recent Turkic invasion was that of the Ottomans, who conquered Meskheta in 1578, although it was not secure as part of the Ottoman empire until 1639, when a treaty signed with Iran brought an end to Iranian attempts to take the region. Yunusov asserts that the period of relative stability provided by Ottoman rule was central in 'unifying all generations of Turks' settled in what is now Meskheta-Dzhavakheti (Meskheta) into a 'new type of Turkic race with its own particular culture' (Yunusov 2000:17,19). According to this (Azeri, pro-Turkic) position therefore, the Meskheta Turks are descended from Turkic peoples who moved into Meskheta. In opposition stand those who assert that the Meskheta Turks are rather Georgians converted (forcibly or otherwise) to Islam during Ottoman rule,²² and that perhaps these Georgians were indeed descended from the Meskhs, resident in the area over two millennia ago (Gachechiladze 1995:25). Between these lie those who see the Meskheta Turks as a population of mixed descent: some descended from Turks, others Turkicized Georgians (Akiner 1986).

²² Yunusov rejects the argument that the ancestors of the Meskheta Turks were Georgians who were forcibly converted to Islam by the Ottomans. He shows that the Ottomans made military service and conversion to Islam mandatory only for the aristocracy, and the peasants for the most part remained Christian (Yunusov 2000:17).

The dispute is far from purely academic. In line with the experience of other Soviet nationalities,²³ the debate over the origins of the Meskhetian Turks has serious political consequences for all concerned, not least for my informants. As noted in the introduction, the Georgian government has long been reluctant to allow the Meskhetian Turks to return to Georgia, let alone to Meskhetia, and debates concerning such political issues have concentrated largely (to the detriment of pressing humanitarian issues) on the group's name (Meskhetian Turks, Ahıska Turks, Georgian Muslims, Meskhetians), and hence on their origins.²⁴

However, when the discussion is framed in historical terms, most of my informants show little interest in ascertaining their origins. Occasionally I was asked, 'Do you know where we came from?'; other non-Meskhetian Turkish acquaintances, frustrated by their neighbours' lack of knowledge on this topic, also asked me this.²⁵ Some Meskhetian Turks have a little knowledge of their past. One of three sisters, chopping beetroot together for a wedding salad, said, 'There are lots of versions of 'who we are,' who we come from. Some say that we're not really Turks, but Georgians, and others say that we are really Turks.' Her sister reported that the Georgians asked Turkey for people to come and live in Georgia, to which Turkey agreed, but only if these people were given land in Georgia. Georgia agreed, and this is how they came to be there in Georgia. On another occasion, a man said, 'I read somewhere that when the Turks came and fought in Georgia they brought their people and left them there.' Such discussions were usually held in matter-of-fact, if not disinterested, tones of voice.

One unusual report was that of Müratdin, a fifty-year old man, who declared, 'I know lots about nationalities problems,' and explained that he had read a book written in 1601, held in a library in Istanbul.²⁶ He said, 'We have been called many things. We

²³ For an account of a similar conflict between the Chuvash and Tatar intellectuals, see Shnirelman (1996).

²⁴ To some extent, this represents a continuation of Soviet policies regarding administration of nationalities, which relied heavily on academic ideas of what are nations, nationalities and national minorities, in allocating social, economic, political, and territorial rights and opportunities to any particular group. See, for example, Eidlitz Kudljok (1985), Guy (1978), Sezkin (1994) and Smith (1996); see also chapter six.

²⁵ A Hamshin Armenian woman, herself displaced during the war in Abkhazia, chastised the two Meskhetian Turkish women with her declaring that they should know where they came from, so that they could tell their children, and they would pass it on to their grandchildren. The Meskhetian Turkish women said nothing.

²⁶ He went into considerable detail as to how the book could be obtained, through a request signed by ten people, and on payment of (during the Soviet period) 110r. There followed a debate between Müratdin and his cousin as to the value of the rouble at that time. Müratdin declared that the dollar cost 57 kopecks, (0. 57r), while his cousin insisted it cost 83 kopecks. Either way, 110r was a considerable sum of money. Müratdin declared, 'I read that book completely,' and that it was written in Russian and Turkish, in Arabic script.

have been called Azerbaijani. We are not Azerbaijani, and never have been. But we are also not Turks. We are Meskhetians. We are descended from two brothers.' He said that he learnt this latter 'fact' from the book written in 1601. He asserted that he had read another book, published in 1671, in which it was recorded that there were then thirteen families of Meskhetians. Müratdin's insistence that they are 'Meskhetians' irritated his (younger) cousin, although out of respect the latter kept his comments until after the former had left. 'He always talks a lot. And he says we're not Turks but Georgians. Get lost, Georgian!'²⁷

Müratdin's intellectual curiosity is unusual.²⁸ Also exceptional is his assertion that they are not Turks. For most, being a Turk is unquestionable. It is a term used to define those who are *bizim şennik*, 'our people.' A woman explained that when they say of others that they are *bizim şennik*, it means that 'they're also Turks.' *Şennik* also translates as 'people' in other contexts: *çok şennik*, 'many people,' and *Ne diyacah şennik?*, 'What will people say?' Like 'people,' the word refers not only to groups of human beings, but to a *specific* group, the Meskhetian Turkish people. My hostess stated, 'It's *natsia*,' using the Russian term which, approximately, translates as 'nation.'²⁹ In some respects, self-perception as Turks relates to their perception of the past. Several people mentioned that they called themselves *Osmani Türkleri*, Ottoman Turks.³⁰ 'We are what is left of the Ottoman Empire. In Turkey forty per cent are Kurds, not Turks. We are the only pure-blooded Turks.'³¹

²⁷ *Poshël von, Gruzint* Note that Müratdin did not actually say that they are Georgians, but Meskhetians, descendants of brothers of unexplained parentage.

²⁸ This absence of intellectual historical curiosity is possibly related to the limited number of well-educated Meskhetian Turks. At the turn of the century, educated Meskhetian Turks were mostly from *bey* (aristocratic) families, many of whom fled to Turkey at the time of the Revolution. Many of those who remained, and other educated people, were arrested and many killed in 1928-37 (Aydingün 2000:131, 158; Yunusov 2000:28). In Uzbekistan, initial restrictions on movement limited opportunities for study until 1956. Thereafter it is possible that discrimination against Meskhetian Turks continued. One man reported that unless one had 'Uzbek' written in one's passport, one could not enter university. However, others denied that there was significant discrimination in Uzbekistan, and most adult men, and some women, attended at least a vocational college. But at the time of the Fergana riots Lur'e and Studenikin note that of the 2,350 Meskhetian Turks in Tashlak, only eight had finished medical or pedagogical institute, and eighteen had completed technical college (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:48). And in Krasnodar in the years following 1989, access to further and higher education has been minimal, both as a result of a lack of the necessary citizenship documents, and the prohibitively high cost. In 1999-2000, the fees alone for a year's post-graduate study at Kuban State University in Krasnodar amounted to 10 000r (approximately £250). However, other factors also affect the average level of education, as demonstrated in chapter four when Aygün's relatives insist that she should marry rather than continue her education.

²⁹ *Şennik* probably translates into Russian better as *narod*, 'people,' than as *natsia*, 'nation,' since the latter now has political connotations that *şennik* does not share. *Şennik* rather refers to a group that shares a language and cultural practices

³⁰ Although some had heard of the name *Ahıska Türkleri*, *Osmani Türkleri* was mentioned more frequently, and the former is not used in daily Meskhetian Turkish conversation. This contrasts with Aydingün's work with this group in Kazakhstan and Turkey. However, it should be noted

However, they describe themselves as Ottoman Turks *in the present*, rather than descendants of past Ottoman Turks. In this sense, their disposition towards the past compares with that of the Jaffna Tamils as discussed in Daniel's analysis of that of Sri Lanka's Jaffna Tamils and Sinhalese. In defining 'heritage/myth' and 'history,' Daniel states that the former 'provides a people with a way of *being in the world*' while history 'provides a way of *seeing the world*' (Daniel 1996:50). My informants seem to share with Jaffna Tamils 'a consciousness of the present, one's present heritage of the past, [rather] than of the past as past' (ibid:27).

The contrasting approach to the past, history as a way of seeing the world, can also be illustrated in reference to their Ottoman nature. When I reported to a colleague at Krasnodar's Kuban State University that my informants say that they speak Ottoman Turkish, he insisted that they are mistaken, since Ottoman Turkish is the Arabic literary language; that is, that it is an aspect of the historical past, and cannot be a living heritage. The Georgian insistence that my informants are not Turks may also be understood in this manner: they maintain a disposition towards the past that insists that what is 'history' is the only appropriate way to evaluate one's position in the present. Analysis in Daniel's terms also makes it possible to explain the significant error in the analysis of the first international humanitarian organisation to be interested in the plight of the Meskhetian Turks, in whose publication it is stated that 'The majority of Meskhetians appear to have experienced difficulty deciding whether they are Georgians or Turks' (Sheehy & Nahaylo 1980:26). I argue that the Meskhetian Turks usually do not feel the need to make such a decision. To be a Turk is to live the past, as inherited practice, in the present; while deciding whether or not one is Georgian requires one to see epistemic 'history' as relevant to one's present, which, I argue, the majority of my informants do not.

Daniel states that what is at stake in the ethnic conflict that has wracked Sri Lanka for the past two decades, is 'more than the mortality of bodies, more than the destruction of life and the demise of security. Rather, what is at stake, especially for those whose bodies have been spared the destruction of death, is the death of a way of being-in-

that Aydingün herself is Turkish, and that her informants were on average far better educated and better employed than mine, and had access to institutions connected with Turkey.

³¹As these comments suggest, Meskhetian Turks have an ambivalent relationship with Turks from Turkey. In some contexts, such as the shared language which is appreciated (by some) through their satellite television from Turkey, Turkey's Turks are *svoi* (R), 'our own.' But most are aware of differences, in, for example, work practice and hospitality expectations (see chapter three). Even for those considering emigration to Turkey, the country is not seen as their homeland, as a place where they belong (cf. Aydingün 2000). I will discuss Meskhetian Turks' perception of homeland further in chapter six.

the-world, the death of that which constitutes their identity, honour, and dignity' (Daniel 1996:67-68). A direct physical conflict over a way of 'being in the world' has not (yet) occurred between Georgian (and Russian) scholars and Meskhetian Turks. But contrasting approaches to history have led to a conflict of words on an international plane, which has serious consequences for all concerned. As noted above, the conflict has focussed upon the name used to refer to the group in question (see Ossipov 2000:161-2).

In Soviet documents concerning the deportation they are referred to simply as Turks, as distinct from the Kurds and Khemshins deported with them (Bugai 1994). According to Wixman, the term 'Meskhetian' only came into use in the late 1950s,³² and then 'as a colloquial designation for the Turkified peoples (Meskhi (Georgians), Khemshil (Armenians), Kurds and Karapapakhs) who formerly lived in the Meskhi region' (Wixman 1984:134).³³ However, it does not seem to have been in such 'colloquial' use in Uzbekistan. Rather, the Uzbeks called them Caucasians, *Kavkazi (R)* or *Kepkezler (U)*.³⁴ Indeed, my informants saw 'Meskhetian Turks' as an invention of their second displacement, rather than their first. One man explained, 'When we were thrown out of Uzbekistan, the President of the USSR gave us a new name: Meskhetian Turks. Meskhetia is a mountain - as if we had just come out of a mountain!' Others agreed, 'Only when all that started did I hear the name Meskhetian Turks; I didn't know before that we were Meskhetian.' However, when it is necessary to do so, they now often use 'Meskhetian' to distinguish themselves from other Turks.³⁵

Khazanov states that, 'in the late 1930s, the Meskhetian Turks did not pay much attention to their official name and ethnic affiliation. Remarkably enough, they continued to call themselves *ierli* (the locals, the natives), which did not have explicit ethnic connotations' (Khazanov 1995:197). I argue that this lack of concern with their official name is not restricted to the 1930s, but is as prevalent now as it has been

³² Nekrich, whose work on the deported peoples was published in New York in 1978, does not use the term 'Meskhetian' at all, despite referring to Conquest (1970), in which the term is used. This suggests that the term was not in common use in the Soviet Union when Nekrich left in 1976.

³³ I shall not here be concerned with the debate as to whom the terms 'Meskhetians' or 'Meskhetian Turks' include, as discussed by Aydingün (2000), Bennigsen & Wimbush (1985:216-219), and Conquest (1970), among others. Suffice to note here that my informants considered themselves different from Kurds and Hemshills - two of the groups that are sometimes included with Turks in the designation 'Meskhetians' - and I neither met Karapapakhs nor heard them spoken of.

³⁴ One woman explained, 'They lived in the country, they didn't know anything!' She laughed that her Uzbek friend, working with her at the *sovkhos*, used to say 'When are you going to your homeland, *Kepkezler*?'

³⁵ It is for this reason that I also refer to my informants as Meskhetian Turks. Simply 'Turks' would better reflect daily naming practice, but given the risk of confusion with other Turks, I use the longer term.

throughout the last two centuries. Although recorded in censuses, passports and other official documents as Georgian-Sunnis, Tarakamans, Muslims, Azeris and sometimes Turks in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and as Azeris, Uzbeks and Turks while in Uzbekistan, I suggest that what others have labelled *bizim şənnik* does not reflect the manner in which they perceive(ed) themselves. In the recent past they have, for the most part, insisted on 'Turk' as that which Khazanov calls their 'ethnic affiliation,' more appropriately describable as 'commonality' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:19-21). What they, as opposed to others, called this in the distant past is very difficult to say.

Awareness of Meskhetian Turks' relative lack of interest in their history, as opposed to their heritage, and the extent to which this contrasts with the positions of other parties which impact on their present, is important since it helps to explain their responses to events both banal and catastrophic. In Bloch's terms, 'No human scientist can... ignore how people represent themselves to themselves in history because it is, to a certain extent, in terms of these representations that they will react to revolutions, migration, or colonial conquest' (Bloch 1996:280). In the remainder of this chapter I examine the events of this nature that have directly affected the Meskhetian Turks in the last century. The following chapters explore how Meskhetian Turks have responded to these events.

Shifting Empires

Meskhetia's period of 'relative stability' came to an end in 1828 when the Russian Empire invaded. By September 1829 the city of Akhaltsikhe had fallen, and the Adrianopol Treaty had been signed, giving nearly half of the Ottoman region of Ahıska (Samtskhe and Dzhavakheti) to Russia. As following other successful invasions of the area, local inhabitants dispersed; probably fifty per cent of Meskhetia's Muslims fled into what remained of the Ottoman Empire, leaving approximately 45,000 in Meskhetia. In addition, the new authorities deported Muslims from the region, and resettled (mostly Armenian) Christians in their place. Following further immigration of Armenians, Greeks and Kurds, and out-migration and deportation of Turks after the Russo-Turkish wars of 1853-6 and 1877-8, prior to the Revolution the population of Meskhetia (Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki regions) was approximately 195,500. Of these, just over half were Armenian, eight per cent were Georgian, and Turks numbered 56,200, twenty-nine per cent (Yunusov 2000:20-22). These details are important in contextualising the events of the twentieth century, as they indicate that the Soviet practice of resettling people (and in particular Meskhetian Turks) was far from unprecedented. In addition, one of

Georgia's most common arguments against the return of the Meskhetian Turks to Meskhetia is that their presence will prompt ethnic conflict with the large number of Armenians in the region (see, for example, Gachechiladze 1995:183). The census data from 1913 indicates that such a population balance would not be a new phenomenon in the region, and it is their absence since 1944 that is historically unusual.

After the collapse of the Russian Empire, in 1917 Georgia and Armenia both invaded Meskhetia to prevent the creation, by Meskhetia's Muslims, of a separate republic. Conflicting treaties signed in 1918 first gave the Muslims of Meskhetia the right to self-determination - they voted to join Turkey - and then required Turkey to withdraw all forces from the south Caucasus. Local Muslims formed first the short-lived Republic of Ahıska; then, with Azeris of Armenia, the South Western Caucasus republic, or Kars Republic, which was dissolved in April 1919 by British forces acting to assist the Georgian government. After the Georgian army took over, the Muslims of Meskhetia were granted legislative autonomy, until the Soviet Russian army occupied Georgia in February 1921.

For the first twenty years or so of Soviet rule, the experience of the Meskhetian Turks mirrors that of other Soviet peoples, particularly that of 'national minorities' and other small groups (see Eidlitz Kuoljok (1985), Grant (1995), for example). Collectivisation began in Meskhetia in 1929, when the poor began working on the *kolkhozy* (collective farms); the rest of the population were obliged to do so by 1935 (Lur'e & Studenikin 1999:35). The purges of the 1930s are also said to have affected the Meskhetian Turkish intelligentsia (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990; Yunusov 2000:28).³⁶ In 'national' terms, unlike some other non-Georgian peoples resident in Soviet Georgia, the Meskhetian Turks did not attain national minority status,³⁷ which would have endowed them with

³⁶ It should be noted that in the 1920s the Meskhetian Turks were a predominantly rural, labouring population, and may have been less affected by the purges of the late 1930s than the urban intelligentsia. Additionally, many ordinary people used, and therefore contributed to the intensification of, the Terror as an opportunity to 'sate their appetite for revenge against at least some of those in power' (Davies 2000:67).

³⁷ In the 1920s, in order to administer the multiple peoples of the territory, the Soviet authorities sought to define all national groups, on the basis of Stalin's 1913 definition of a nation as 'an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up, manifested in a common culture' (Stalin 1953[1913]:307). All peoples were allocated group cultural, economic and political rights in accordance with their stage of development towards nation status. Those peoples who were not deemed to have reached the 'national' stage of development had group rights within the republic in which they resided. Similar 'coercive nation building' (Tishkov 1992:381) had occurred during the Imperial Russian Empire (Fitzpatrick 2000b:39-40). See Eidlitz Kuoljok (1985), Guy (1978), Martin (1998 2000), Slezkine (1994), and Smith (1996) for discussion of the theory and practice of Soviet Nationalities Policy; see also chapter six.

political status, increased cultural and economic opportunities and their own territory.³⁸ One result was that the Meskhetian Turks were, and to some extent remain, caught between a Georgian determination to integrate them into Georgian culture, and Soviet Union-wide policies on the development of minority peoples.

Until 1926 teaching in schools in Meskhetia was provided in Turkish, in line with early Soviet moves to provide every nationality with its own written language (Eidlitz Kuoljok 1985:59-69). But in 1926 the language of instruction switched to Azeri, on the basis that there were insufficient Turkish-speaking teachers. In the mid-1930s, all Transcaucasus Turkic peoples were officially designated 'Azerbaijanis' by the central Soviet authorities; this accounts for the lack of a separate entry for 'Turks' in Georgia in the 1939 census (Gachechiladze 1995:92, Yunusov 2000:28). At the same time, the Georgian authorities returned to a policy that they had sought to implement during the first five years of Soviet rule, to "ensure the return of Muslim-Meskhs to Georgian culture" (in Yunusov 2000:27). Along with other peoples in Georgia, Meskhetian Turks were required to change their surname to a Georgian one, to attend Georgian schools, and to alter their nationality (in official documents) to Georgian. Although the policy was abandoned after Meskhetian Turks failed to attend the schools (op cit), it demonstrates that the present Georgian approach to the Meskhetian Turks (that they must accept that they 'are' Georgians in order to return to residence in Georgia) is a continuation of that of the authorities at the time of their deportation.

Deportation

The deportation of the Meskhetian Turks from Georgia to Central Asia in November 1944 is usually discussed in association with the other deportations of the war years, of the Volga Germans, Crimean Tatars, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, and Karachais. While Germany's invasion in 1941 did lead to an escalation in Soviet forcible removal of populations, as noted above the practice had earlier Russian precedents. Moreover, it was a practice used elsewhere in Europe. Prior to World War I Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire organised massive resettlement of Turks, Bulgarians and Armenians, and the practice was repeated following the war with the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1922. Following World War II the victorious Allied powers assisted in the massive eviction of Germans from central and eastern Europe (Zolberg, Suhrke & Agnayo 1989:22). Within the Soviet Union, 'popular ethnic

³⁸ Notable in comparison are the neighbouring Georgian-speaking Muslims, the Azhars, who were thus recognised, and were allocated their own republic (Aslan 1996:7, Slezkine 1994:429).

cleansing' (Martin 1998:827) began as early as 1921, with mass expulsions of Russian settlers from the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republics. But the state-organised forced resettlement from and to the 'border regions' of the Soviet Union sheds most light on the events of 1944. These regions were designated a special administrative territory in 1923 and, at least in some places, populations here were given more national rights than other Soviet peoples, in the hope of attracting their 'ethnic brethren' across the border (ibid:831). But a further result of the Soviet belief in cross-border ethnic ties was the government's fear of collusion of Soviet citizens with their non-Soviet brethren. Such a fear resulted in plans for the first organised resettlement - of Koreans - in 1928. Although this plan was not then activated, forced resettlements which were at least partially ethnic in character (such as those of Ukrainian 'nationalists,' Polish 'kulaks' and Kuban Cossacks) occurred during the grain crisis of the early 1930s. Most significantly, from 1935 to 1938, Poles, Germans, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Koreans, Chinese, Kurds, and Iranians were resettled from the border regions: that is, 'national minorities... with cross-border ties to a foreign nation state.' The same occurred between 1944 and 1953, when Kurds, Khemshils, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians and Iranians were moved from their homes in the border areas of the Crimea and Caucasus (Martin 1998).³⁹

It is in this context that the resettlement of the Meskhetian Turks from Georgia to Central Asia must be understood. While the Soviet Nationalities Policy sought to develop nationalities culturally and economically, it allowed for exceptions when the security of the socialist state as a whole was threatened (Guy 1978:722; Lenin in Guy 1978:711; Stalin in Conquest 1970:116,117). And in 1944 the Soviet authorities felt that the Meskhetian Turks posed a security threat. Turkey had been negotiating the 'fate of the Turkic peoples' of the Caucasus with Germany, (in particular that of the Crimean Tatars, Balkars and Karachais, all of whom were deported to Central Asia when the Soviet forces regained control of the regions in question), with a view to establishing closer relations between the region's Turkic people. It seems probable that the Soviets knew something of these negotiations, and were concerned for the security of their border with Turkey (Hostler 1957, Nekrich 1978:18-19).⁴⁰ Additionally, letters to and from Beria, People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (NKVD), demonstrate the authorities' concern that for several years 'a considerable part of this population [of

³⁹ See Gelb (1996) on Finnish forced migration; Skultans (1998) and Kilis (1999) on Latvian forced and voluntary migration, and Voutira (1991) on Pontic Greek migration in the twentieth century

⁴⁰ Some maintain that the Soviet intention was to invade Turkey. Khazanov claims that 'there are many evidences [sic] that at that time Stalin planned to invade Turkey and wished to clear the Transcaucasia of those ethnic elements who did not enjoy his confidence' (1995:197). I have not seen details of such evidence.

Turks, Khemshils and Kurds living on the border with Georgia], connected with the residents of Turkey's border regions through kinship ties, has been involved in smuggling, shown emigration intentions, and is serving Turkish intelligence as a source for recruiting espionage elements and propagating bandit groups' (original in Bugai 1994: 44, my translation).

The Meskhetian Turks were told that the region was to become a 'closed zone,' as it indeed became; the eighty-five kilometre border region was compulsorily settled by 30,000 Georgians from west Georgia, and closed to the Meskhetian Turks. Many of my informants explain the deportations in terms of the risk they were seen to pose to the security of the Soviet Union, and the 'clearing' of the border zone. One said that where they used to live there was a narrow river, and the border between Turkey and Georgia was in the middle of this river. Turks lived on either side of the river, and the authorities thought that they would betray the USSR if there was a war with Turkey. Another man stated that, 'In 1914 [sic] Atatürk and Lenin drew a line, and said Batumu to there, this to there, and made Turkey and Georgia. Whoever ended up where... who didn't like it, ran away. And then in 1943 [sic] Stalin cleaned this up [motioning to part of tablecloth that was standing for the Georgian side of the border].' A third man said that they were deported 'because the Germans were coming closer. We had relatives on the other side of the border, and Stalin was afraid that we would help the Germans.' He added that he had read this in a book, and that Stalin had then filled the space with 'his own people.' Another said that Stalin wanted to enlarge his empire, so moved the Turks out and settled his own people where they had lived. Notably, nobody mentioned whether or not they or their parents had shown any interest in helping or joining the Turkish state.

In the summer of 1944 NKVD (internal police) officers arrived in each of the 220 villages in which Meskhetian Turks resided, and troops arrived at the end of October. From 11th November no-one was allowed in or out of the villages. On 15th November, having been told that they were to be moved temporarily, they were given, according to some, two hours to collect their luggage. The Meskhetian Turks were then driven, in American Studebaker trucks, to the railway which many of them had recently helped to build. There they were loaded into goods wagons, in which they were to stay for the following twenty-five days, as they travelled to the Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republics (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:37-41). Official records show that 92,307 persons were deported from Meskhetia, of whom 18,923 were men, 27,399 women,

and 45,985 children under sixteen years old.⁴¹ Of these, the majority, 53,133 people, were resettled in the Uzbek SSR; 28,598 in the Kazakh SSR, and 10,546 in the Kyrgyz SSR (Bugai 1994:18-19). Approximately 40,000 Meskhetian Turkish men fought in the Red Army during World War II, and many of the 19,000 who survived only discovered that their families had been moved on return to Meskhetia in 1945. According to NKVD documents concerning the deportation, 14,895 Meskhetian Turks, Kurds and Khemshils died between the date of the resettlement and June 1948 (Bugai 1994:19).

Unlike the Crimean Tatars, who annually commemorate their own deportation on its anniversary, the *kara gūn*, 'black day'; have monuments to the deportation in the Crimea and diaspora; and all cite the (inflated) mortality statistic of forty-six per cent (Brian Williams, personal communication), few of my informants remember the year of the deportation and none mentioned the exact date. Additionally, few people told detailed stories of the journey to Uzbekistan,⁴² and those details which were revealed were usually discussed in some context other than a conversation specifically concerning the deportation. A few men related their mother's or father's experiences; the following description of the narrator's father's journey is typical:

When they came to tell the people that they were going, they were given two hours. Those who thought about it slaughtered two or three sheep to take; others took a suitcase of clothes. Then they had to walk about four kilometres, and there were loaded into train wagons 'not the sleeping wagons, but those for goods,' seven or ten families to a wagon. They travelled for fifteen days, and the doors were not once opened; the only air they got was through the windows, and all they were given was water to drink. And people died, and they had to just throw them out; the train did not stop long enough for them to bury them.

Although the deportees were given some food, the poor sanitation (a bucket in the corner), cramped conditions and the lack of heating meant that many of the 're-settlers'

⁴¹ These numbers are still debated. For details, see Bugai (1994), Khazanov (1995:198), Pohl (n.d.).

⁴² This is in part because I was unable to speak directly with many older people in the early stages of my fieldwork, as they spoke little Russian and I little Meskhetian Turkish. However, the fact that there seems to be little tradition of passing on detailed stories of displacement to younger generations and visiting anthropologists fits with the rest of my data concerning the lack of public discussion of personal suffering. See below, and chapter five. Additionally, comparison with other researchers' collected stories suggest that those anecdotes I was told are fairly typical of those of other Meskhetian Turks (for example, Aydingūn 2000, Bugai 1994:154-158, Forced Migration Projects 1998, Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:37-42, Ray 2000). I did not explicitly set out to collect stories of deportation. Other researchers have sought out tales of suffering and I suspect(ed) that this distorts the picture of the role such stories play in daily life.

died on the journey, and most reports agree that the bodies were not buried.⁴³ Officially 457 people died, although this number is contested, particularly since there is a discrepancy of 2,648 between the number who left Georgia and those who arrived in Central Asia (Bugai 1994:45; Pohl n.d.). Escapees, perhaps shot, may account for some of these. A young woman talking of her paternal grandfather mentioned that he had a brother of about eighteen years when they were deported from Georgia. One day, when the doors were opened on the train, he got off, 'to get water or something,' and the train left without him. 'Because of the war they never found him again,' she said.

The scarcity of these stories is notable. Research has shown that the children of Holocaust survivors have difficulty retaining detailed memories of their parents' experiences (Karpf 1996:241). This suggests that my informants' limited knowledge of the events of 1944, and the contrasts between stories about the journey (such as that the train doors were never opened yet they threw out bodies, and one man disappeared to fetch water when the doors were opened), are not unusual for such a population, if the events were discussed within the household and between relatives. However, it is notable that these narratives are infrequently shared or debated between the Meskhetian Turks themselves, whereas other victims are known to frequently recall events they have communally suffered (ibid:149). Why this may be so is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

Life with the Uzbeks

On arrival in Central Asia, the trains were dispersed to *sovkhozy* and *kolkhozy* (state and collective farms) across the region, where the arrival of the Meskhetian Turks was expected. Some sources tell of considerable generosity on the part of the local Uzbeks (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:42-45); others write of unmitigated hardship, including lack of adequate housing, clothing, and medical care (Conquest 1970, Nekrich 1978, Pohl n.d.). The authorities did make special provisions for the Meskhetian Turks for 1945, including distributing 17.5kg wheat, 40.5kg barley, 37.5kg potatoes, and 3kg fruit to each person, a calf to each household, and clothes and shoes to those in need. This was in part compensation for the possessions left behind in Georgia, which were recorded and distributed to the three receiving Republics. Additionally, the settlers were not obliged to pay taxes nor supply foodstuffs to the state for 1945 and 1946 (Bugai

⁴³ Merridale notes that during this period, due to lack of time and resources, many Soviet soldiers were also not buried when they died at the front (Merridale 2000:269-305).

1994:51-56). Nevertheless, official documents record deaths of 19,047 persons deported from Georgia between 1945 and 1950, while births totalled only 7,383 (ibid:80-81). While these figures would benefit from comparison with Uzbek mortality rates for this difficult post-war period, and birth rates were undoubtedly affected by the loss of young men in combat, the settlers' conditions were obviously detrimental to their health.

The Meskhetian Turks were placed under the 'special settlers' regime, which required them to register monthly at the special commandants' offices, and within three days of births, deaths and any family member's escape; restricted their movement to within a three kilometre radius of their homes, unless given special permission;⁴⁴ and banned marriages between members of different settlements (Khazanov 1995; Nekrich 1978; Pohl n.d.). In his 'Secret Speech' to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, Khrushchev declared that the deportations were 'monstrous' acts, 'not dictated by any military considerations,' and 'crude violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationality policy of the Soviet state' (Khrushchev 1956:23).⁴⁵ In so doing, he placed the blame firmly on Stalin's shoulders, and away from the Soviet project as a whole: a placement which, for the most part, my informants seem to follow. Following this Congress, 'special settler' status was rescinded, but a decree of 1957 reported that the Georgian government felt it lacked the capacity to resettle the Meskhetian Turks (notably referred to as Azerbaijanis), and hence could not allow them to return (Khazanov 1995:199).

My informants often frame their experience of arrival and early experience of life in Uzbekistan within their conception of themselves as a 'people that likes to work, that does not leave work undone,' a *trudoliubivyi narod* (R), industrious or 'labour-loving' people.⁴⁶ Talking of their expulsion from Georgia, several told a similar story:

⁴⁴ Note that travel, work and residence in towns was restricted for *anyone* (not just special settlers) without a passport; that is, for most of the rural population. Only in 1953 did a statute allow rural people to visit passportised (urban) areas for up to thirty days, and then only on the basis of a permit issued by the rural authorities. Although conditions for special settlers were undoubtedly particularly restrictive, it should not be thought that other rural dwellers were free to do as they pleased (Matthews 1993:25,31).

⁴⁵ It has been frequently noted that the Meskhetian Turks, along with the Volga Germans and the Crimean Tatars were not mentioned in this speech, nor in the first public statement concerning the deportations made by Gorkin in February 1957, in which the Balkars, Chechens, Ingush, Kalmyks and Karachai were rehabilitated (Conquest 1970:145-147). It may be significant that the latter five groups were able to return to their previous places of residence shortly after rehabilitation, whereas the former three groups were not permitted to do so until considerably later, if at all.

⁴⁶ See chapter six for further discussion of the Meskhetian Turks' attitude to 'work.'

'When the wagons got to Azerbaijan, they wanted to throw all the Turks into the sea, to kill them completely. But then the President of Central Asia phoned up and said, 'I'll take them, they can work for me'. So they sent us to Uzbekistan, the hungry steppe; people died of hunger there. After fifty years, when we had made the place liveable in, we were no longer necessary, and they threw us out. We were given refugee status in middle Russia, where there is no electricity, no water, nothing.'

A woman who was fifteen when she left Georgia reported that when they arrived in the Uzbek SSR, the Uzbeks were very poor. She had taken with her dried sweetcorn, and made bread with it, which her new neighbours had never seen before. They taught the Uzbeks how to grow sweetcorn and other things, since 'when we arrived they ate grass.' One woman explained, 'Ours came and built houses; there was nothing there when they arrived after the war. We built, and now it is for the Uzbeks. Probably nothing works there now. It was Turks alone; probably nothing works now.' Others agreed, declaring, 'We built everything!' Notably within a few years of resettlement, several Meskhetian Turks were reported to have fulfilled their production norms by two hundred per cent, and others had worked 1005 and 2000 'labour days' (Bugai 1994:24-25). Many people felt that Uzbeks became jealous of their hard-work, and hence threw them out of the country, only for the process of reclaiming the barren land to be repeated in Russia.⁴⁷

The majority of research into the experience of the Meskhetian Turks in the Uzbek SSR after 1956 has focussed on their campaign to return to Georgia. According to Yunusov, by 1959 this embryonic movement was already 'beset by internal conflict' (2000:31), namely concerning whether or not they were 'Meskhs,' or Georgian Muslims, and should return to Georgia and become Georgians, or whether they were Turks and should therefore move to Azerbaijan (see Bugai 1994, Yunusov 2000 for detailed accounts). It is unclear the extent to which this debate was of popular concern, or whether, as now, it was largely a political debate of minor interest to most. Either way, this focus of interest yields little understanding of the relations between Meskhetian Turks and those already living in the regions in which they were resettled. My informants' passing comments about Uzbeks refer to the way they drink tea, the friends with whom they picked cotton with school, or the way they dressed. Occasionally, a story was told of a successful Meskhetian Turkish *kolkhoz* president who was refused a prize until he changed his passport nationality to Uzbek, or a man refused entry to

⁴⁷ Uzbek envy of Meskhetian Turkish agricultural success was also seen by many outside observers to be a central factor in the Fergana conflict (Forced Migration Projects (1998), Wynne Russell, personal communication).

university because he wouldn't 'become' the titular nationality. But such comments are relatively rare,⁴⁸ and little in my informants' narratives or the existent literature prepares one for the seemingly sudden and murderous events of 1989, in which tens of thousands of Uzbeks attacked their Meskhetian Turkish neighbours.

Events of 1989

In the summer of 1989, 109,000 Meskhetian Turks lived in the Uzbek SSR,⁴⁹ of whom about 16,000 lived in Fergana *oblas'*, in the east of Uzbekistan, bordering Kyrgyzstan and Tadjikistan. The total population of the Fergana region was 2.1 million; Uzbeks constituted 81 per cent. Many other minority groups (Russians, Tadjiks, Kyrgyz, Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Koreans) were resident in the area in greater numbers than the Meskhetian Turks. The events which led to the migration of most of Uzbekistan's Meskhetian Turks began in May 1989, in Kuvasai, a town in the Fergana region. On 15th - 16th May Uzbek and Tadjik youths fought with Meskhetian Turks and Tatar youths. Over 23rd and 24th May, a crowd of Uzbeks gathered in an area of Kuvasai occupied primarily by Meskhetian Turks, and the police could not prevent several injuries and the death of one Meskhetian Turkish man. These events, however, were minor in comparison to those occurring between 3rd and 6th June. Crowds of several thousands, most of whom were Uzbeks, gathered in towns of the region: Margelan, Taskhlik, and Fergana.⁵⁰ Meskhetian Turkish houses were sought out, looted and set on fire; if their occupants had not escaped, they were frequently trapped inside and burnt to death. Other Meskhetian Turks were attacked with knives or burnt in cars as they were trying to escape. According to the Deputy General Prosecutor of the USSR, 'The murders were mostly of a brutal, mutilatory character' (quoted in Bugai

⁴⁸ This is not to say that such occurrences were, or were not, rare. Ray asserts that in order to satisfy statistical reports to Moscow, Meskhetian Turks were instructed to report their nationality as Uzbek after they finished school, and those who refused were denied school-leaving certificates and entrance to university (Ray 2000:393). Her source for this data was presumably her informants. In other circumstances, observers have demonstrated that issues which murderously divided communities were of no consequence a few years previously. It has been asserted that in Yugoslavia, at least in towns and in the army, friends did not know each others' ethnicities prior to the war; in Ottoman Turkey, that Greeks and Turks lived as peaceful neighbours (Draculić 1999, Hirschon 1989:29, Panov 2001). Others argue that this was not the case in, for example, rural Yugoslavia (Cornelia Sorabji, personal communication). With regard to Fergana, in the effective absence of historical research and my own informants' comments on such matters, I will not explore the issue further here.

⁴⁹ This represents approximately half of their total population; the remainder were living mostly in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, with a small number resident in Russia.

⁵⁰ Lur'e & Studenikin (1990) is the most detailed published account of the events; Bugai (1994) includes several pertinent official documents. In English, Ossipov (n.d.) and Yunusov (2000) include summaries of the events, as do various NGO publications, including Forced Migration Projects 1998, Human Rights Watch (1998), Laczko (1998), Li Rosa et al (1997), Ossipov & Cherepova (1996), and UNHCR (1999).

1994:134, my translation). It was only on 6th June, by which time their numbers had been increased by 13,000, that the military were able to adequately control the crowds. Although disturbances continued until 11th June, they were largely against police and administrative buildings; most Meskhetian Turks had by then been gathered at the military range in Fergana ready for evacuation.

Many of my informants knew of people who had been killed in Fergana, and most themselves left either Fergana or Tashkent shortly after the riots. Some told of the atrocities, usually those seen by others.⁵¹ One woman reported that neighbours in Baku told her, "They threw stones at us, as we ran, and anyone who was hit and slowed down they cut up." She added, 'They killed pregnant women. Do you know how they killed them? They cut them right in the stomach. They slit open the stomach, through the baby, alive. The fathers, husbands were there, and they made the women give birth in front of them, saying "He ought to see, he's your father".' Another woman said that her cousin's husband was killed with four other members of his family. As they were escaping in a car, Uzbeks stopped them, poured petrol over the car and set it alight. A friend of her husband's was also killed with four members of his family. Another woman said, 'They burnt old people; stuck poles through children; cut up with knives the stomach of pregnant women. On the plane when they were leaving, a child was left below. A woman cried out 'I've left my child off the plane.' An Uzbek stuck a spear through the child and held it up in the air: 'Here you are, woman. Here's your child!'"⁵²

I was told only one detailed story of the events, notably by Habila, a woman who knew me well. Having moved to Krasnodar in 1986, she had not been in Fergana in June

⁵¹ Notably no-one spoke of rape, although it did occur (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:16,26; Aleksandr Ossipov, personal communication). This may be because my informants did not know any women who had suffered thus. However, I would expect the silence surrounding the abuse of women to be deeper than that concerning other atrocities. See chapter five and conclusion on silence, and Das (1990b), Draculić (1999), Dedich (2001), and Littlewood (1997) on silence following rape during collective violence.

⁵² Some of these women had read a book published in 1990 by two journalists who arrived in Fergana on 7th June. Independently they reported that thirty thousand copies were printed, but 'only six or seven were sold, before they collected all the copies of the book back in. On a raised platform the old [Uzbek] men burnt all the books.' Aleksandr Ossipov, a Moscow based scholar and human rights activist, whose doctoral thesis is based on (pre-1989) research with Meskhetian Turks (Ossipov 1993), notes that this may have occurred, although the book was published in Moscow so only a small number could have been collected (personal communication). The book, lent to me by my informants, is Lur'e and Studenikin's *The Smell of Burning and Sorrow*, the most comprehensive account of the events of 1989, notably based mostly on interviews with military personnel rather than Meskhetian Turks. While heaping praise on the police and military's work and concern for their suffering (to the extent that the suffering of the Meskhetian Turks occasionally seems secondary), the book makes clear that Uzbeks rather than Meskhetian Turks were responsible for the events, and criticises politicians for failing to prevent such occurrences, or prosecute all those responsible.

1989, although she had visited relatives in the region only a month previously. The story concerns the death of Süleman, her husband's sister's husband. (Her husband's sister, Farida, later told me briefly of her son's relatively recent death by drowning, but never mentioned her husband's murder).

The women had been cleaning silk cocoons outside the house of Farida's three brothers and their mother. On one side of the house was a big main road, on the other a village road. The children, except one baby, had all been sent to stay with the youngest brother's Russian fiancée. The oldest brother's wife, Sadat, had recently made several mattresses; material was cheap then, and the stuffing came free from her workplace. She had kept these in the cellar, thinking that if the house burns, these will not. Also in the cellar was a suitcase of valuables, including the mother's earrings, kept for her youngest son's bride. But they had no time to take anything from the house, not even a suitcase, although they managed to take their documents. They were sitting outside, when a crowd (*tolpa* (*R*)) came towards them along the road. (Habla reported, twice, that the attackers had been smoking drugs and were drunk, and that they were paid). Sadat, a large woman, had said that her legs froze, she was so frightened, and could not move, but one of the men picked her up and put her in the neighbour's car. They squashed lots of people into the car and escaped to where the police were keeping all the Meskhetian Turks.

Süleman's father worked as a security guard, and had a building with big iron doors. He and Süleman hid in there, the father saying, 'The Uzbeks will not touch me.' But the crowd got onto the roof, and threw a lighted bottle into the building, filling it with smoke. The two men escaped through the garden; the father went one way, Süleman another. But some children [presumably Uzbek] saw Süleman, and told the Uzbek crowd, who caught and killed him. They cut his body into pieces and threw them into the river. (The river was not like the one in Oktiabr'skii, Habla noted, but had cemented sides. She said it was beautiful). Süleman's father's brother was hiding, but he saw these events. He could not come out or he too would be killed.

The description ended as Habla's son entered the house. Notably I heard no tales of the killings from men, although a few did describe their journeys away from Uzbekistan, usually when no-one else was present.

Between 11th and 17th June more than 16,000 Meskhetian Turks were evacuated from Fergana *oblast'* to Belgorod, Voronezh, Kalinin, Kursk Orlov and Smolensk *oblast'*s in Russia. Here some were allocated new or empty houses, but many stayed in schools, hostels, and clubs until they could be housed. In addition, by 5th July more than 4,000 people had already left other regions of Uzbekistan of their own accord, arriving in Krasnodar and Stavropol *krais* and the Kabardino-Balkar Republic in Russia (Bugai 1994:110-112). Within a year, 74,000⁵³ Meskhetian Turks had left Uzbekistan; the majority moved to Azerbaijan (40,000), Kazakhstan and Russia. Meskhetian Turks also moved from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and moved on from their place of arrival within Russia, to Azerbaijan, and in some cases to Turkey. Other nationalities, including Crimean Tatars and Russians, also left Fergana (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:100; cf. Pilkington 1998).

During the riots of June 1989, between 112 and 117 people were killed. Of these, it is thought 63 were Meskhetian Turks. Some others were policemen, and some were Uzbek civilians, killed in the last days of the riots when the troops began to use firearms. But the remainder, including Crimean Tatars and Russians, were 'people killed as Meskhetian Turks 'by mistake' (Aleksandr Ossipov, personal communication).⁵⁴ In addition, over a thousand people were injured, and 856 homes and administrative buildings were burnt (Bugai 1994:131). It is estimated that up to seventy thousand people were involved in the riots. Of these, over 800 were arrested, and 420 were found guilty in the 250 cases taken to the courts, almost all of whom were Uzbeks from Fergana *oblast'*.

Many of my informants asserted that their Uzbek neighbours were not responsible for what happened. Several, like Habila, insisted that those who killed were drunks and drug-addicts. One woman said the local Uzbeks stole from the houses, but only the drug-addicts burnt them. It was frequently asserted that the rioters were paid, or at least organised, by outside forces. One man said, 'In Uzbekistan, Russians did that. They got people from one village to go to another [demonstrating with his fingers, one group going away, another coming towards us], from another region, so that they wouldn't meet an acquaintance.' He added, 'The Uzbeks cried when we left; our Uzbek

⁵³ Some writers state the figure was 90,000. Yunusov, for example, gives both figures at different points in the same work (2000:37,46).

⁵⁴ A complete break-down of those killed has never been released. Lur'e and Studenikin note that at the time of writing, it was thought 106 had been killed, of whom four were women. By nationality, they included 45 Meskhetian Turks; 12 Azerbaijanis (note that they may have been Meskhetian Turks, recorded as Azerbaijanis in their passports); 35 Uzbeks (probably this includes the majority of police casualties, as well as rioters shot by the military); 5 Russians, and one Tadjik, Tatar, Bashkir, Armenian, and Greek. The nationality of the remainder was unknown (1990:84).

neighbours cried, they did not want us to go.' But when asked why the Russians wanted a conflict, he shrugged. Another woman similarly asserted the responsibility of Russians: 'They cannot have been normal. But they say that there were Russians too. Russia, that is. Russians organised it, people say. Who was president? Gorbachev? No. Yes, it was Gorbachev. The second minister, he was also guilty. Afterwards he left, he was embarrassed.' Some felt the riots were part of an Uzbek plot to rid Uzbekistan of others, since 'after that, nationalism started.' The Uzbeks could not throw the Russians out 'because earlier Uzbekistan was part of Russia [sic].' Instead, the Uzbeks started to forbid the Russian language, and schools were instructed to teach only in Uzbek. The violence against the Turks was to set an example that would frighten the Russians into leaving. One woman declared, 'They did it so that the Russians would leave on their own. They did, you see. After they saw what happened to us, the Russians left too.'

Hirschon admires the manner in which her informants, Asia Minor Greeks descended from refugees from Turkey, similarly attribute blame to politicians, and away from their acquaintances. 'Older people were quite categorical that the disturbances and military confrontation which finally resulted in their flight were not the responsibility of the ordinary Turk. They attributed the hostilities between their communities to interference by 'the Great Powers.' Again and again the conclusion was, 'The politicians made us hate each other' (Hirschon 1989:30). I suggest that, at least in the case of the Meskhetian Turks, such attribution of responsibility is not necessarily astute, but should be examined for the refusal to believe that common people could do such a thing. A similar approach has marred assessments of the 1930s Soviet purges, since focusing on the role of Stalin and his immediate associates fails to illuminate the relationship between leaders and others, and the mechanisms of the Soviet system which gave the Terror a 'certain rationality' (Davies 2000, Harris 2000, Kotkin 1995:283-353).

Yet the perception that the riots were (externally) organised is common to most observers of the 1989 conflict; for the most part the debate concerns only who was responsible. Yunusov, for example, states that, 'Today we know that the Uzbeks planned the attacks and their actions followed an organised pattern...The real organisers of the massacre in Uzbekistan will not be known until the relevant documents are released from KGB archives' (Yunusov 2000:36). Many Georgians believe that the "operation" was directed at them; 'It was probably assumed in Moscow that the fear of one more potential ethnic conflict in the republic would have sobered the "stubborn Georgian nationalists"' (Gachechiladze 1995:183). In Azerbaijan, Meskhetian Turks stated that the rioters were Armenians disguised as Uzbeks (Ray

2000:394)⁵⁵. Others have suggested that anti-perestroika forces inside the Uzbek Communist Party were responsible; that the Soviet KGB wanted to drive labour-power to central Russia; or that pan-Islamists or competing ethnic mafia were responsible. If it is not thought that the events were centrally organised, then it is usually assumed that the riots resulted from liberalisation policies which 'lifted the lid on simmering nationalist sentiment among Uzbeks,' fuelled by overcrowding and widespread poverty (Forced Migration Projects 1998:6). Ossipov rejects these theories, stating that there is no evidence of government plots, significant prior nationalist or Islamist sentiment, nor of the Meskhetian Turks' significant economic advantage. He suggests rather that the riots were "irrational", resulting from an escalation of spontaneous mob violence: a suggestion made publicly only by the Uzbek Communist Party leader Rafik Nishanov (Ossipov n.d.).

It seems that many observers have attempted to answer the difficult question of 'why' before fully comprehending 'what happened' (Stewart, M 2001). Lur'e and Studenikin's thorough (if pro-military) account provides clues which suggest both a less coherent but also a simpler explanation for the events. Leskov, Fergana's KGB chief, asserted that the early disturbances in Kuvasai in May 1989 were primarily the result of the fact that a (predominantly Uzbek) gang of youths was eager to take local 'power,' since the 'boss' of the previously strong (and predominantly Meskhetian Turkish) gang had recently been killed in an accident (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:55-56).⁵⁶ The riots spread to other towns in part through rumours that Meskhetian Turks 'were talking of a bloody night in revenge for the Kuvasai carnage.' As a result, 'panic started. People were very scared,' and began to construct barricades and talk of self-defence. On *Kolkhoz Imeni Lenina* (Collective farm in the name of Lenin), for example, crowds gathered as they heard that 'the Turks are coming.' Despite attempts by the *kolkhoz* president, who had witnessed events elsewhere, to convince the crowd that that the atrocities were being committed *against* rather than by the Turks, the masses attacked Meskhetian Turkish homes, looting and burning thirty-two in the village (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:70-72). Matters were undoubtedly not helped by the authorities' refusal to allow newspapers to print the nationalities of those killing and those being killed.

The collective violence of June, therefore, was of a different nature from the precipitating events of May, in that the actors were the rumour-panicked crowds of

⁵⁵ Note that since 1988 Armenia and Azerbaijan had been involved in violent conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, and that Meskhetian Turks in Azerbaijan have probably imbued anti-Armenian propaganda, just as my informants have recently imbued war-driven anti-Chechen attitudes from Russian media.

⁵⁶ See Humphrey (1991, 1996/7) and Pilkington (1994) for the prevalence of youth gangs in late 1980s and early 1990s Soviet towns.

ordinary Uzbeks, as opposed to the deliberately violent clashes between rival (and incidentally predominantly Meskhetian Turkish and Uzbek) gangs of youths. As Kakar notes, often the 'precipitating incident' of a riot is of a very different character from the 'ultimate causes' of the conflict (Kakar 1996, cf. Merridale 2000:89-90). Others have demonstrated the frequency with which riots have been sparked by minor insults or misinterpreted behaviour at markets (Engel 1997, Kakar 1996:44, Thompson 1971), and it is notable that beyond Fergana the riots of 1989 are known, by Soviet and American authorities, as 'the strawberry wars,' said to have begun in a market conflict over the price of strawberries (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:26,56; Wynne Russell, personal communication).

One does not need to identify considerable Uzbek nationalist sentiment prior to June 1989, as Ossipov requires, in order to explain how, from a fight between youths, the Meskhetian Turks came to be identified as a group which presented a threat to ordinary Uzbek people. In part, decades of Soviet Nationalities Policy, which classified and allocated rights to people according to their ascribed 'nationality,' encouraged the perception that people acted as representatives of their 'national' group. But the circumstances of riots themselves can encourage people to 'totalise' others, perceiving them as representatives of a group with common, and often threatening, characteristics (Kanapathipillai 1990:332, Das 1998). As illustrated by the actions of the people of *Kolkhoz Imeni Lenina*, an otherwise inconsequential event which affected a small number of people may be distorted into horrifying collective violence through the efficacy of rumour.⁵⁷ As Kakar states,

'At the high point of a riot, the content of the rumours is at its most threatening and the speed at which they circulate at its highest. For it is at this particular time when three of the four conditions for the generation and transmission of rumours – personal anxiety, general uncertainty, and topical importance – are at their highest level. The fourth condition, credulity, is no longer in operation since, at high levels of anxiety, disbelief in rumour is suspended, that is rumours will be believed regardless of how farfetched' (Kakar 1996:35).

⁵⁷ It seems probable that the riots were also encouraged by individuals, who, like Kakar's 'strong men,' or Brass' 'fire-tenders,' encouraged the spread of rumours for their own ends (Kakar 1996, Brass 1997:16). 'Unknown outsiders' are mentioned in both Meskhetian Turks' accounts of the events and in the testimony of others (military, taxi drivers, neighbouring Uzbeks) heard spreading word of the coming of the Turks,' or shouting down figures of authority who disputed the rumours. These men were perhaps members of the Kuvasai gangs, perhaps others accused in the many conspiracy theories mentioned above. Yet one does not need to know who they were in order to understand how the riots spread to involve so many ordinary Uzbeks.

It is under these circumstances that those who, in hindsight, can be seen as most vulnerable, become perceived by others as a dangerous threat.⁵⁸ As Stewart notes, political violence is often presented by its perpetrators as justifiable self-defence against those attacking, or about to attack (Stewart, M 2001, see also Das 1998, Sorabji 1994, Spencer 2000). This, I suggest, is what occurred in at least some of the Fergana towns in June 1989.⁵⁹

But rumour and the resulting riot and loss often have the same totalising affect on the *real* victim population (as opposed to those who perceive themselves as (potential) victims, and thus inflict violence), in that they begin to perceive themselves as a group, as their attackers do. Das notes that, 'Earlier, the victims had wondered how Hindus could have killed Hindus, for they had always assumed Sikhism to be related to Hinduism, as had many Hindus. The riots forced them into a separate identity of Sikhs, for they had been compelled to die as Sikhs. Now many wondered if anyone was interested in them as persons or if they were to be forever pawns in the games of others' (Das 1990b:388). In many cases, 'rumours are the fuel and riots the fire in which a heightened sense of community is also forged' (Kakar 1996:35).

But while the 1989 riots 'totalised' the Meskhetian Turks in the eyes of (at least some of) their Uzbek neighbours, and (as in 1944) in the eyes of the central Soviet authorities, who evacuated them *en masse* to Russia,⁶⁰ it is notable that the reverse is not true. As Kanapathipillai notes with regard to Sinhala-Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka, 'There is a strong tendency on the part of victims of violence to totalize the

⁵⁸ It is notable that being the victims of such rumours does not prevent a population from imbibing state propaganda against similar persons. This was illustrated by an incident related by all local residents, including the Meskhetian Turks, concerning the murder of a small boy in a town close to Apsheronsk in May 2000. A man came to a house and asked for a piece of bread, but while the child's mother went to fetch him some food, the three year old ran out and the man slit his throat from ear to ear. The mother, discovering this, screamed, whereupon neighbours ran to the house and killed the man. All who discussed the story commented that the neighbours would not be charged for killing the man, since he had killed the child for no reason. The story was in circulation thirty miles away, the day after the murder. All local residents, including Russians, Armenians and Meskhetian Turks, had heard and were convinced that the murderer had papers on him proving that he was a Chechen. A week later, when it was reported that the murderer was not a Chechen but a homeless Russian, no-one was particularly interested. Many Meskhetian Turks were initially sympathetic to the plight of the Chechens, not as fellow Muslims or Stalin's deportees, but because so many people became refugees. But by May 2000 the consistent media propaganda had turned all the rural population against Chechens

⁵⁹ It has not been possible to develop this argument further as I have not undertaken research in Uzbekistan and do not have access to Uzbek and other Soviet official records.

⁶⁰ It could be argued that the Soviet authorities' mass evacuation of the Meskhetian Turks hints at their involvement in precipitating the riots. However as discussed in this chapter, there exists considerable Tsarist Russian and Soviet precedent for large-scale removal of peoples in general (and the Meskhetian Turks in particular) in order to resolve potential or actual conflicts. I suggest that the authorities' decision to organise evacuation reflects a continuation of this practice, and it is not necessary to argue that it was a pre-arranged aspect of a planned conflict.

characteristics of a group. However, the notion that groups have characteristics comes in conflict with one's experiences of the particular individuals of a community, which is varied and rooted in concrete events' (Kanapathipillai 1990: 332; see also Das 1998:124, Spencer 2000). My informants have *not* totalised the Uzbeks in this sense, but rather go to some length to insist that those who committed violence were drugged, drunk, paid or directed by others, if not actually (Armenian, Russian) others; that is, that they were not ordinary Uzbeks. In addition, the Meskhetian Turks do not seem to have 'totalised' themselves in response to the violence. While most describe those attacked as 'us,' in practice these narratives are not openly shared, and nor, significantly, have they been used to consolidate a successful communal political movement demanding retribution or political recognition.⁶¹

Krasnodar

Between fifty and seventy thousand Meskhetian Turks presently reside in the Russian Federation,⁶² of whom up to seventeen thousand live in Krasnodar *krai*, forming approximately 0.3 per cent of the *krai's* total population. Krasnodar lies on the north coast of the Black sea and has a small border with Georgia in the south east (see appendix: map c). It is well-known as the Kuban grain-growing region, part of southern Russia's 'bread-basket,' taking this name from the Kuban river that flows through Krasnodar *krai*. Meskhetian Turks live predominantly in four districts: approximately 9,000 live in Krymsk and 2,000 in Abinsk, to the west of the *krai*; in the east, 1,500 live in Apsheronk and 2,500 in Belorechensk. At most, they form 6.4 per cent of the region's population (in Krymsk), and their highest concentration is in two towns of this region, in which they account for 12.5 per cent of the inhabitants. Note that according to the 1997 census, Russians formed over 85 per cent of Krasnodar's inhabitants, and that Meskhetian Turks represent a very small proportion of the remainder, even in comparison with other minorities (Armenians (4.5%), Ukrainians (4%), Belorussians (0.8%), Greeks (0.6%), Adygeans (0.4%), Germans (0.4%)) (Ossipov 2000:13, 24-25).

Over two thousand Meskhetian Turks already lived in Krasnodar prior to 1989, having been invited by the authorities to work in the tobacco and dairy *sovkhozy* (state farms)

⁶¹ The unrepresentative and ineffective nature of the two most significant Meskhetian Turkish campaigning organisations, Vatan and Hsna, has been previously discussed by myself and others (Adam n.d., Tomlinson n.d.).

⁶² Of a total population of approximately 300 000. Most live in the former Soviet Union in Kazakhstan (80-100,000), Azerbaijan (40-60,000), Kyrgyzstan (25-30,000), Uzbekistan (15-20,000), Ukraine (5-10,000) and Georgia (only 643). About 15,000 live in Turkey, mostly around Bursa (Aydingün 2000:79, Ossipov 2000:10; Yunusov 2000 50)

and wood mills in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Ossipov & Cherepova 1996:5). As a result, many of those who moved there after 1989 (all of whom came of their own accord; Krasnodar was not an evacuation destination) came to join relatives. Others took advantage of the fact that a large number of Crimean Tatars were leaving Krasnodar for the Crimea, and thus houses were empty or could be purchased cheaply. According to Ossipov and Cherepova, many were also attracted by the fact that the *krai* borders Georgia, and intended to return there soon (1996). My informants mostly said they came to join relatives, or came to see and 'I liked it here.' One man, whose story is not atypical, when asked why he came to Krasnodar in particular, declared 'How do I know? God knows!⁶³ I don't know.' Then he thought and added, 'All mother's brothers and sister had gone to Krasnodar. I thought 'Let mother be with her brothers.' It was said that Krasnodar was a good place. Warm. We're from Asia, where it's warm. A friend in Uzbekistan had lived here, and said it was a good place.'

In Russia, all (legal) residents must have a *propiska*, or 'residence permit,' a stamp in their internal passport⁶⁴ officially recording their address, and hence enabling access to other entitlements including pensions and healthcare. *Propiski* (pl.), and internal passports, were first issued in the Soviet Union in 1932 to urban dwellers, in part to control migration to the city, although internal passports were in use prior to the Revolution when they were required by (and sometimes refused to) peasants who wished to travel for work outside their district (Fitzpatrick 2000b:34, Kotkin 1995:166). Only in 1974 did passports become obligatory for all Soviet citizens; until that time rural dwellers had not been issued with passports, significantly restricting their rights to move to urban areas (Matthews 1993:25-35). Local authorities were and remain entitled to refuse to grant *propiski*. While Meskhetian Turks were registered without problems in almost all other post-Fergana destinations, the Krasnodar authorities refused, and continue to refuse, to register most of them, and more than ten thousand of Krasnodar's Meskhetian Turks today remain without *propiski*.

These problems were exacerbated with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. When the Russian Federation's law 'On Citizenship of the Russian Federation' came into force in February 1992, all citizens of the former Soviet Union permanently residing (not, note, in possession of a residence permit) on the territory became Russian Federation citizens, unless they requested not to become citizens. Thus, since almost all Krasnodar's Meskhetian Turks arrived prior to 1992, they are, by law, Russian

⁶³ *Chët ego znaet!* (R), literally, 'The Horseman knows!', a colloquial, slightly despairing, comment made when the reasons for something are unclear

⁶⁴ Internal passports serve as identity cards. If one wishes to travel abroad one must have citizenship (see below) in order to apply for an external, *zagranichnyi* (R), passport.

Federation citizens. However, the authorities insist that they are not, sometimes asserting that 'permanent residence' means 'registered residence'; at other times, that the Meskhetian Turks are (and were) 'temporarily resident,' in transit to Georgia. Federal authorities, for the most part, do not challenge Krasnodar's interpretation of the law in this regard⁶⁵ (Ossipov & Cherepova 1996, Ossipov 2000).

In what has been described as the first occasion since Stalin's rule of the open violation of 'the rights of a whole category of the population... on the basis of their ethnicity' (Ossipov 2000:7,17), the denial of citizenship and *propiski* further deny Meskhetian Turks access to pensions, social benefits and free health care; severely restricts their ability to buy and sell land, houses and cars; restricts access to employment; prevents registration of marriage, and hence of children in their father's name; prevents travel abroad,⁶⁶ and denies them a vote.⁶⁷ In addition to these restrictions, Meskhetian Turks have been required to pay considerable sums for 'temporary registrations' of between three months and a year, and are also fined if the police find their documents not to be 'in order.'⁶⁸ Also pernicious are the authorities' continued unsubstantiated allegations, in local newspapers, on the television, and in public meetings, of the Meskhetian Turks' illegal acts (including theft, rape, murder and drug-dealing); unsanitary habits; monopolisation of markets; refusal to learn Russian; deliberately increasing the size of

⁶⁵ The Russian Federation government figures responsible for resolution of the 'problem' include several prominent academics, including Valeri Tishkov and Nikolai Bugai, both of whom have written critically of the earlier attitude and acts of the Soviet regime towards the Meskhetian Turks (see, for example, Bugai 1994, 1996; Tishkov 1992:374, 1997). However, their approach to the present discrimination is notably supportive of the Krasnodar authorities. Speaking at a public meeting in Krymsk in September 1997, Bugai stated, 'You've already had a sad experience of events in Uzbekistan, you need to learn the lessons and solve a ripening conflict peacefully. Nobody invited you to the Kuban, nobody promised you anything here' (quoted in Ossipov 2000:49).

⁶⁶ Unless moving to permanently reside in another country. In a few instances, the authorities have issued one-year non-citizenship external passports for persons moving to Turkey. These do not entitle the bearer to return to Russia. Turkey had also not granted citizenship to the vast majority of its Meskhetian Turkish immigrants, but the identity cards issued by the Meskhetian Turkish association in Bursa have a certain "illegal validity" in the eyes of the local police (Aydingün 2000:175). This does not, however, give them the same rights as citizens.

⁶⁷ Note that some Meskhetian Turks do have both *propiski*, and hence are entitled to vote. See chapter six.

⁶⁸ Note that such police attention is not limited to Meskhetian Turks; all residents are liable to fines if their documents are not in order. However, as elsewhere in Russia, 'peoples of Caucasian nationality', also known as 'blacks', are targeted for discrimination (cf. Lemon 1998:46-47). Outside a train station in Rostov my hostess and I, alone of all the passengers leaving the train, had our documents demanded by the police. They threatened to detain my companion on the basis that she has *propiski* for three houses in the same village in her passport (because an official forgot to include an 'annulled' stamp). They released us without fines only after entertaining themselves over the presence in Rostov of an 'English *kolkhoznik* (collective farm worker)', and stealing a stick of sausage. I have little doubt that we were selected for questioning because we were the only passengers wearing headscarves, a marker of Muslim 'Caucasian nationality'. (Old Russian women also wear headscarves, but tie them in front of the neck rather than behind).

their families; and even refusal to register in order to avoid conscription⁶⁹ (Gusev 2000; Ossipov 2000).

Further, the Krasnodar authorities politically and financially support 'Cossack' organisations, which take it upon themselves to remove passports and threaten Meskhetian Turks if they do not leave the *krai*. In the early 1990s, the intimidation included the flogging of several men by groups of Cossacks. Although these incidents were concentrated in the west of Krasnodar, fear of Cossacks was also felt in Apsheronsk and Belorechensk. One woman said that her sons used to hide beneath the bed when they saw a Cossack in uniform in the streets. She said there used to be lots of Cossacks in uniform about; they used to come into the house and frighten the children. Another explained, 'They used to be allowed to walk round the village with clubs. They would come right into the house; we were afraid. But then the Administration stopped it, did not allow them any more. And now they are not important. There are three, four Cossacks here, all drunks.'

Although Cossacks activities have quietened somewhat, the 'problem' of the Meskhetian Turks remains, in the eyes of the authorities, one of how to remove them from the *krai* as soon as possible. They assert that Turks and Slavs cannot live together, and that their presence exacerbates ethnic tensions in the *krai*. As Ossipov and others have demonstrated, much of the 'tension' is constructed and encouraged by the Administration's own pronouncements and support for Cossack activities; even the *krai's* inflammatory Governor does not suggest that the Meskhetian Turks are themselves instigating fights. But the 'solution,' covertly supported by Federal authorities, and not overtly criticised by UNHCR is to encourage the Georgian government to arrange for their 'return' (Li Rosi et al 1997, Ossipov 2000).

In the meantime, the Meskhetian Turks continue to be denied *propiski*, since their stay is still, after ten years, considered to be 'temporary.' But as one man noted, 'They don't give us citizenship and passports because they don't want people to stay here. They think that once we have passports we will want to stay. The majority of people here would leave if they were given passports.' But without *propiski*, they cannot leave, because they cannot obtain external passports. Discussing obtaining the furniture of relatives from Krymsk who were planning to move to Turkey, one woman scoffed, *Ondan propiska yokhtu; kim gidiyir Türkiy?* 'There they don't have *propiski*; who's

⁶⁹ This was asserted in a newspaper article very shortly after my hosts' son, who does have a *propiska*, had been conscripted into the army. Unusually (normally only the mother reads) both his parents and his sister looked at the article; his sister retorted, 'And my brother is doing what now, in the army?,' while his parents said little.

to Turkey?' Thus in refusing to register their 'temporary' residents, the Krasnodar authorities may be prolonging the stay of some Meskhetian Turks.

The *krai's* authorities have recently stepped up their attempts to evict the Meskhetian Turks. On 20th February 2002 the regional legislature adopted a decree 'On the Additional Measures to Decrease Tensions in Inter-ethnic Relations in the Areas of Compact Settlement of Meskhetian Turks Temporarily Residing on the Territory of Krasnodar Krai,' which not only appealed to the federal government to speed up the 'repatriation' of the Meskhetian Turks to Georgia, but also proscribed any registration of 'stateless persons.' A month later at a meeting about migration issues, held in Abinsk and attended by 400 district and regional officials, the *krai's* Governor announced that fines for residence without registration would be raised to 6,000r (approximately US\$200). It was further proposed that 'detention and filtration' centres be established in order to facilitate the deportation of 'illegal migrants,' and that monthly charter flights should commence to evict Meskhetian Turks to Tashkent, Uzbekistan (MINELRES 10 April 2002, RFE/RL 20 March 2002). Although the latter involves forced movement across international borders to a country which is unlikely to welcome their return, that the authorities are serious about their intentions was illustrated in April when families of Kurds resident in the *krai* for several years were expelled to neighbouring Rostov *oblast'* (RFE/RL 17 April 2002). Alongside these official encouragements to migrants to leave the region, recent reports suggest that the Cossacks have increased their harassment of Meskhetian Turks, and gravestones in the Armenian cemetery in Krasnodar city were destroyed in April (RFE/RL 24 April 2002).

The Meskhetian Turks' options regarding their future residence, either in Krasnodar *krai* or elsewhere, are thus severely restricted, if not endangered, by the political activities of other more influential or vocal groups both locally and internationally. Other anthropological work on forced migrants has highlighted the geo-political aspects of refugee-hood, and demonstrated that refugees are sometimes used as pawns in international squabbles, to the extent that a resolution of their situation is not seen by all as politically expedient (Allen & Morsink 1994:11, Reynell 1989:175, contra Malkki 1995b). There can be no doubt that the Meskhetian Turks are similarly weak players in an international dispute involving the governments of the Russian, Turkish and Georgian states, and international bodies of such standing as the OSCE, UNHCR and the European Parliament.

Beyond Public Spaces

In her work on Armenians forcibly displaced from Turkey in the 1920s, Pattie describes memories of the massacres and deportations as 'the most striking part of the Armenian shared background,' one which is 'internalised, absorbed from family attitudes and schooling' (Pattie 1997:23). She notes that while 'some parents felt their children and grandchildren had not really wanted to hear about it or said they couldn't bring themselves to tell of such horrific experiences,' others had made a point of passing on their stories to their descendants, and encouraged each other to do the same (ibid:16). While Armenians 'speak of feeling both a collective debt to the past and an individual one' (ibid:23), it is notable that on the few occasions when Meskhetian Turks do speak of these events, they rarely speak of their *feelings* about the past at all.

In present-day Krasnodar, Armenians (recently displaced by the conflict in Abkhazia) are building a church above Apsheronsk town, and annually commemorate the Ottoman genocide of 1915. It is striking in comparison that their Meskhetian Turkish neighbours' children are sometimes unaware that their grandparents were forcibly resettled less than sixty years ago, and that their parents do not easily recall the date when this occurred. The summary given above of Krasnodar authorities' antagonistic attitude to the presence of the Meskhetian Turks in the *krai*, indicates that my informants are not encouraged to feel secure in their present residence, nor to complain about their treatment by official and unofficial groups. It suggests that they are not offered a public space for talking of even their most recent tragedy, let alone the events of 1944 (Kirmayer 1996, Stewart n.d.). The same is undoubtedly true of the period 1944 to 1956, until their rehabilitation following Stalin's death. Further research would be necessary in order to ascertain what, if any, public space was available, if not explicitly provided, for commemoration, in the remaining years of the Soviet regime. While the existence of a small but active rehabilitation movement indicates that open discussion was possible, considerable ethnographic research elsewhere demonstrates that a public space does not equate with political recognition, and nor are individuals' or even communities' narratives of pain necessarily coterminous with the stories told by those who seek to represent them (Karakasidou 1997; Verdery 1992; Watson 1994). I shall return to the significance of the political conditions in Krasnodar for the Meskhetian Turks' memorialisation of suffering in chapter five.

But an absence of public space is not enough to explain the Meskhetian Turks' approach to their past.⁷⁰ The events of 1989 and 1944 remain part of the Meskhetian Turks' history, as related to and by observers who come briefly into contact with these people. Yet I have suggested that my informants are more concerned with the past as intra-communal practices of 'heritage' rather than as publicly debated narratives of 'history.' To better understand their response to 1944 and 1989, therefore, we must look beyond their public 'history.' An absence of public space for commemoration goes some way towards explaining this relative silence, but is far from sufficient for an understanding of how events of the past are in fact integrated into present.

As demonstrated in this chapter, in others' narratives of, and actions during, the past two centuries, the Meskhetian Turks have been unified or totalised, into a bounded 'group' (Brubaker forthcoming), often perceived as threatening. I argue that the Meskhetian Turks themselves largely do not, and probably have not, shared this totalised view of themselves. While most talk of 'us' as having been driven out of Georgia and Uzbekistan, it is not an experience that many share, either literally or in narrative. This is not to say that there are not characteristics that my informants see as unifying them with all other 'Meskhetian Turks.' Rather, their unifying acts are acts of heritage rather than reiterations of history. I suggest that it is in the everyday practices of being Meskhetian Turks that we find more comprehensive answers as to how they have reacted to, dealt with, or 'survived,' displacement; and why they have done so as they have. It is to examining those everyday practices that I now turn.

⁷⁰ To use a local comparison Armenians in Krasnodar are a focus of the authorities' unwanted attentions to almost the same extent as the Meskhetian Turks most newspaper articles criticising one also criticise the other Many of the Armenians in the *krai* moved here within the last decade, also escaping violent conflict. Yet the Armenian community commemorates its past sufferings and builds churches for the future, as well as countering the Governor's attacks with articles in their own newspapers (Ardovast Tulumdzian, personal communication). In addition such attacks seem to unify the Armenian community to a greater extent than they do the Meskhetian Turks.

2. Households

Describing her flight from Uzbekistan in 1989, Gulpaşa, a woman of forty explained,

'I had a two storey house. First we had a one storey house, then with credit we bought a two storey house. In Tashkent, in a different village [from her husband's parents]. We lived there only two months. Then the Uzbeks started against us. One day, I made dough, you know, for bread. He came home and said we should go to his parents. So we took everything and left. I took the dough in the car. Then we all went to Baku.'

The inclusion of the mundane act of bread-making in this narrative is particularly significant for understanding both how the Meskhetian Turks have continued their lives after fleeing Uzbekistan, and how displacement itself has been dealt with pragmatically, without allusion to personal suffering. This latter aspect I consider further in the second half of the thesis. In this chapter I describe Meskhetian Turkish daily activities in Krasnodar, based on my experience in one village, Oktiabr'skii. Everyday economic life revolves around the household, the smallest communal unit in Meskhetian Turkish society. The 'ordinary' task of living the everyday, in circumstances of economic hardship shared with their neighbours, occupies most of my informants' time and conversation. The very mundane and habitual nature of household life refutes suggestions that the displaced lose all their practical bearings in dispersal. But occasionally it also reveals the continuing fears and uncertainty that those who have not been displaced do not experience.⁷¹

Houses and Households

Houses in rural Krasnodar are generally of two types. Most villages have some *barak* (*R*) (terraced) houses, formerly owned by the *sovkhoz* (state collective farm), with allotments of land (*ogorody* (*R*)) a little way from the houses, separate sheds (for keeping animals, storing tools, wood, potatoes, animal feed), and often a shared water supply in the form of a tap by the road. In Oktiabr'skii, these houses consist of two rooms plus a corridor and a small (sometimes shared) courtyard, and are faced by a row of sheds which serve as kitchens. Toilets are erected away from the houses by the sheds. But the majority of a village's houses are individually constructed, with their

⁷¹ Karpf's autobiographical account of the experience of children of Holocaust survivors illustrates how traumatic experience may affect later daily life and the upbringing of children (Karpf 1996, see also Leydesdorff et al 1999).

ogorod, sheds, toilet, and woodpile adjacent to the house. These are often larger than the *barak* houses, with three or four rooms, although they too often share a water tap. In Apsheronsk only in the towns is gas piped to the houses; my informants cook and heat their homes using the wood-fired stove, *pec*, found in every house. In the summer bottles of gas are sometimes used for cooking in the separate kitchen, since heating the stove overheats the house.



1. Oktiabr'skii in winter. *Barak* (R) houses (right) face the village shop and *sovkhos* warehouse.

Meskhethian Turkish houses, *evler*, are usually free of clutter. They are distinguishable from other houses in this region of rural Russia by the raised platform, *sekü*, which occupies half of the main room (near the stove), and is covered by a rug and with thin mattresses, *minderler*, and large cushions, *yastukhlar*, around the walls. Here the household eats at a small low table, *sofra*, which is stored in a back room when not in use. Here too people watch television and chat to passing neighbours; men smoke; women knit socks and mend clothing. Here bread is made: the dough mixed, the loaves formed and the hot bread cooled; potatoes are peeled, fruit chopped for preserving. And at night, here the senior members of the household sleep.

In a second room stands the wardrobe, shared by all household members but accessed only by women and children, and a display cabinet, with special glassware and crockery on display. In one corner stands a large painted chest, *zandoh*, upon which is stacked the bedding: more *minderler*, *düşekler* (larger mattresses), and *yorhanlar* (woollen quilts). There may be a dressing table with large mirror, and a

sewing machine in a small cupboard. The floor is again covered by a rug, and *minderler* are ranged along its edges, for sitting and sleeping. Most houses have whitewashed walls, hung with large rugs and old poster-calendars showing flowers or playing kittens. A Qur'an hangs in a velvet bag on a nail at the top of a rug, alongside a couple of large photos of deceased parents or sons, and perhaps the senior couple's wedding photograph.

The doorways are covered by thin curtains, which are closed at night, during prayer, or when someone changes clothes. Coats are hung in the corridor, and shoes are always removed here. There may be a fridge or gas stove in the corridor, or shelves holding crockery for daily use, although in many houses these are all found in the small kitchen, which is either a small room off the corridor, an open fronted lean-to, or a separate outbuilding. In the kitchen are stored milk products, flour, the milk separating machine, and oil for cooking. Any additional rooms are similarly furnished with mattresses and cushions, sometimes with an additional *sekū*, wardrobe, or metal bed on which bedding is stored. Some houses have a bathroom (a room with a tiled floor and small stove on which to heat the water) but most people use a metal bath weekly in front of the main stove. Some households have built an outside *sekū*, used extensively in the summer for eating, socialising and even sleeping, but also for sorting and cleaning crops for sale and consumption. Flowers and grapevines grow around the front of the house, a dog lounges by the gate or cow shed, and chickens and ducks peck at the dirt.

The household almost invariably consists, as a minimum, of a married couple and their children. Often grandchildren are also present, since an elderly couple never lives apart from at least one of their (married) children. When a girl marries, she joins the household of her husband. Here they stay, usually until after the birth of at least one child, and even then it is unusual for a married son to leave his parent's household until shortly before the space is needed for the forthcoming marriage of a younger brother. Brothers may continue to share a household, and some do so even after their parents have both d'ed. When a couple does move out, it is usually to a house bought or (at least in the past) built close to their parents' house. In Uzbekistan it was common for brothers to be built a couple of rooms which opened onto their parents' courtyard. The youngest son does not leave his parents' house on marriage, but stays with them until their death, and then inherits their house. Unmarried children remain in the parental household until marriage and, since they are unlikely to marry after reaching their early twenties, some households include adult unmarried daughters or sisters. A divorced

woman should also return, sometimes with her children, to her parents' or brother's household.

As discussed in the introduction, I did not undertake surveys that would allow me to generalise accurately concerning the usual constitution of households. However, all my elderly informants resided with at least one of their children; in the one case where this was an unmarried daughter, the son had married a Russian and moved away. His absence from his parents' home was critically commented upon by them and other Meskhetian Turkish neighbours. As I left Krasnodar, it seemed that as a result of illness and marital breakdown, he was about to return to their household. Several married brothers, with or without surviving parents, continue to live together with their wives and children; one household of twelve people consists of two brothers, their mother, their wives and collective five children, plus the two unmarried children of their deceased older brother. Another brother, his wife and two children have recently moved out, fourteen⁷² of them having lived together in a four-roomed house for ten years. Almost all unmarried or divorced women live with their parents, or, if the latter are dead, with a brother and his family. The criticisms of the one exception (a woman who divorced her husband - who is in prison - and lives with her younger son, the elder son having moved out with his wife and new baby) demonstrate that hers is an unacceptable situation. As Delaney comments of households in Anatolian Turkey, 'Singleness is an attribute of God, not of creatures. A single lifestyle is not viable in the village, and marriage is all but obligatory' (Delaney 1991:99). A married couple is central to a Meskhetian Turkish household, and a single woman should not encourage rumours by living (almost) alone. The only other household that I know which lacks a married couple consists of an elderly woman whose husband recently died leaving her with four unmarried adult daughters and a granddaughter. In this case, again, the couple's married son lives nearby, and is criticised for having left.

Thus although the presence of a married couple and at least one child is the minimum expected of a household, other relatives (siblings, parents or brides) are present in perhaps half of my informants' households. This diversity reflects the fact that it is the *household* rather than the nuclear family that is the primary social grouping among the Meskhetian Turks. When asked for a translation of the Russian *semia*, 'family,' several people paused before suggesting *ev içine*, literally 'inside the house,' or 'household.'⁷³

⁷² Two children have been born since the brothers all resided together.

⁷³ *Ev içine*, derived from the Uzbek for 'home,' or 'inner' (*ichki*), is also occasionally used. Note that *ev* can refer to 'home' (as in *evgelecam*, 'I'm going home'), to another house (where two houses, or separate buildings, are owned by one household, the other is referred to as *qyanki ev*, 'the other house') or a room within a house (in reference for example, to the back room when the speaker is in the main, front room).

The term *ev içine* is however rarely used. Rather the suffix *-gil* or *-loh* is added to the name of one member of the household, usually the person most relevant to the speaker. The former is used when there is movement by or towards the people in question: *Biz gelecah Guldastagil'a*,⁷⁴ 'We are going to visit Guldasta (and the people with her)'; *Guldastagil ev içine gelecahler*, 'Guldasta's people are coming here.' When there is no connotation of movement or visiting, *Guldastaloh* is used. As Guldasta's sister explained,

'Guldastagil'a is when you are going to see her, but it is not just her there, there are many. *Guldastaloh* is when you are just talking about them, not just about her. When people ask 'Who are they?', you say *Guldastaloh*, Guldasta's family (*semia (R)*), the many people with Guldasta.'⁷⁵

In rural Turkey,

'In daily conversation, the suffix *-gil* (family of, or those affiliated with), can be attached to practically anyone, male or female. Thus to convey that Ali and his family came to visit, one might say "Aligil geldi," or to say that we are going to Fatma's house, "Fatmagile gidiyoruz" (Delaney 1991:153).

Note however that *-loh* and *-gil* do not only apply to members of the household of the person in question. This was illustrated when *Guldastagil* did indeed come to visit: Guldasta came with her husband, her husband's sister, her husband's nephew and niece by another sister, and Guldasta's own father's sister. Only the first three live in the same household (along with Guldasta's husband's parents, and his sister's two children); the others live in two additional households, but all could, on this occasion, be described as *Guldastaloh*, or *Guldastagil*.⁷⁶

This practice points to the placement of a person within a 'potentially expansive' circle of kin (Bodenhorn 2000:143), rather than firmly fixed and identified as a member of a

⁷⁴ In Turkish and Meskhetian Turkish, the *-e* or *-a* (dative case) suffix indicates direction, 'to' or 'for' a place, person or thing.

⁷⁵ *Loh* is used in other contexts as a marker of quantity. In particular, morning (*sabah*) and evening (*akşam*) meals are sometimes referred to as *sabahloh* and *akşamloh*. The word for pay is *ayloh*, 'monthlies.' And *-loh* is also used with numerals. When one woman asked another how many sacks of flour she had left at home, the latter replied *Altıloh*. *Yediloh var'dur*, *Aygün kuçti*, 'There are six. There were seven, [but then] Aygün [her granddaughter] got married.' Lastly, the price of a dress was given as *uç bi loh*, 'three thousand [rouble]s.'

⁷⁶ Bodenhorn identifies a very similar mode of associating people among Inupiat in Barrow, Alaska. There the suffix *-tkut* provides the closest translation of family, but, as among the Meskhetian Turks, the collectivities so described are not limited to those consanguineally related, nor to those resident in the same house (Bodenhorn 2000:129).

particular household. It is for this reason that although the household does serve as a bounded group in several contexts, as will be discussed below, the Meskhetian Turkish house(hold) itself is not a perpetual entity, of the type identified by Levi-Strauss, and more recently discussed by the contributors to Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995), Freeman (1970), Pina-Cabral (1986), Pine (1996) and others. In these cases, 'houses come to stand for social groups' (Carsten & Hughes Jones 1995:1), and the social group in question has a continuity represented, usually, by the physical house itself, and by the name of the house. Although the practice of continued residence in the parental household of a youngest (male) child among the Meskhetian Turks is similar to residence patterns elsewhere (Pina-Cabral 1986), its stated purpose is the continued care of the elder generation, rather than the continuation of a particular social unit, and the particular house in which the household resides has little significance.

Meskhetian Turks do not fit this model of 'house-societies' in part because they do not identify with the physical space of the house.⁷⁷ *Ev içine* refers literally, like 'household,' to the *people inside* the house, without specific attachment to the house itself. Nor are they identified by reference to their 'house,' but rather by reference to their 'village' (see chapter three) or father (cf. Pine 1996, vom Bruck 1998:269). And the household is only a corporate group in certain settings.⁷⁸ It is an interesting question whether this lack of attachment to the concept or physicality of a house is related to the Meskhetian Turks' historical experience of multiple displacement. It is notable that the Anatolian villagers studied by Delaney, who share many cultural practices and an Ottoman past with the Meskhetian Turks, do identify a group of people with the house they occupy. In the Turkish village that she studied, the *ocak*, hearth, of a house symbolises the patriline represented by the house's occupants, and 'the spark that keeps it going.' The birth of a son is discussed as the continuation of the hearth (Delaney 1991:159, cf. Bloch 1995, Carsten 1997, Pina-Cabral 1986). Notably the Meskhetian Turkish oven or hearth is not seen as symbolic, despite the moral value of bread baked there, which is often associated with such symbolism (Tomlinson forthcoming). Such lack of attachment to objects and physicality, and its relationship to the experience of displacement, is discussed further below.

⁷⁷ See chapters three and six for discussion of Meskhetian Turks non-territorial identification.

⁷⁸ Although this is also true of, for example, the Iban *bilek* (house), which is economically self-sufficient, and has its own rice-spirit (Endicott 1970:23,146-153), but cooperates jurally and ritually with the other ten or so *bileks* of the long-house, in the Iban case the *bilek* is also a perpetual unit (Freeman 1970).

Labouring together

Lack of *propiski* (residence permits) and other official documents restricts the jobs available to men, and thus most are either in low-skilled employment (particularly, in the wooded foothills of the Caucasus, working in saw mills), or rent land from sometimes distant *sovkhozy* (state farms) in order to grow crops for sale. Those few women who are employed work mostly at the local *sovkhoz* (compared to other villagers, who work in schools, offices, the hospital) which pays approximately 200r a month, often given in kind rather than cash. Other women raise crops on their own *ogorod* for sale at the market, sometimes combined with crops grown by their husbands elsewhere. None of these activities are particularly lucrative, and most Meskhetian Turkish households have little spare cash for luxuries.

My impression is that many Meskhetian Turkish households in the east of Krasnodar are poorer than their Russian neighbours. As noted in the introduction, I was not able to undertake surveys that would provide useful comparable statistics, and thus the impression of relative poverty is gained from occasional visits to non-Meskhetian Turkish neighbours' houses for tea, coffee, and celebratory meals. Anecdotal evidence is provided by a television report aired late in 1999, lamenting the hardships suffered by pensioners, who at that time received just over 600r a month. A selection of items bought for approximately 200r was displayed, including a loaf of bread, sugar, tea, washing powder, salami (*kolbassa (R)*) and soured cream (*smetana (R)*). The presenter commented that this included no treats, such as chocolate. He concluded that a pension does not suffice for a normal life. Watching the programme, I caught myself thinking that salami and soured cream are indeed treats. The household in which I was based only ever purchased such delicacies as salami on the occasion of visits of the eldest daughter's recent in-laws, and almost all soured cream (made at home from cow's milk) was made into fat for cooking. Their monthly income was between 1,200r and 1,500r, which fed and clothed six people. They own no car or video machine, and when their old television broke it was twice replaced by machines which were 'gifts' from other people, for whom they were taking up space. Biscuits and fruit are only bought when guests are expected, and potato soup forms at least seventy percent of their meals.

However, this household is one of only two of the village's seventy households that own a horse, and it keeps a cow and three calves, which is more cattle than most. It is also one of two households to keep sheep (the other is also Meskhetian Turkish). And when they moved into a *sovkhoz* barracks house, which they purchased after the

collapse of the Soviet Union, they retained their previous small house. Although the house is now disintegrating dangerously, the land around it provides a large *ogorod* in which is grown potatoes, carrots, and sweetcorn, with space left fallow for cattle fodder. The other *ogorod* contains black and red currant bushes, plum and apricot trees (unlike most others), and they have access to *sovkhos* resources because the mother is an employee. This case illustrates the lower end of the scale of Meskhetian Turkish income, but it is typical in the sense that my informants' energy and investments are focussed towards household agricultural production. A very significant proportion of their time when not in employed labour is spent growing and processing foodstuffs.

Although household members are almost invariably related, the nature of the relationship is less important than their participation in the household's activities. As I discuss in the following chapter, even unrelated others can and are absorbed into the household after they have been a guest for 'three days.' Thereafter they become *bizim*, 'ours,' and are expected to contribute to the household's labour.⁷⁹ Although it took me longer than three days to ascertain what was expected of me as a member of the household, my integration became frustratingly evident towards the end of my fieldwork, as the following excerpt from my fieldnotes illustrates:

I spent almost all day typing fieldnotes about yesterday's wedding. For this my hostess criticised me, although not directly. On both occasions it was with regard to me not helping make the *piroshki* (*R*) (pastries). She said to her daughter, while the latter was waiting for her mother to finish making a pastry before frying a batch: 'I thought Katia would help but she is typing.' The second time was to a neighbour and the neighbour's relative, saying that I could not go and stay with the relative today because 'She is writing. She wrote all day today, and did not help make the *piroshki*.' Both these comments were in Meskhetian Turkish⁸⁰ and neither entirely true: I cleaned and cut up onions, but did not help make the pastry circles. A little later and in a 'nice' voice, she said, 'Did you put the water on to wash up Katia?' It was a pointed comment and when shortly afterwards I finished typing, I did wash up, while everyone else ate *piroshki* and watched cartoons.

By occupying myself with personal non-contributory activity (typing up fieldnotes) I was not involving myself with the communal labour activities expected of me as a young female household member. Labour expected of household members varies according

⁷⁹ Werner notes that the same is true of temporary household members, always relatives, in Kazakhstan (Werner 1998 599).

⁸⁰ That is, neither were directed at me, since my hostess always spoke to me in Russian

to age and seniority. Men should provide for the household financially. However, this does not prevent women from earning money to support the household, and it is notable that while, according to one man, it is a tenet of Muslim law that a man should earn at least a *kopeck*⁸¹ more than his wife, this does not mean that a woman should not earn money at all. Women, on the other hand, are responsible for feeding and clothing the household and serving its guests. This of course overlaps with men's obligations, since it is she who usually spends the money that he earns, and they together (although unequally) farm the *ogorod* (allotment) and potato fields allocated by the *sovkhoz*. Any distinctions between the space and nature of male and female obligations, however, do not reflect the fact that all members of the household share the burden of its maintenance.

This interrelated responsibility is demonstrated by the household's use of money. It is Meskhetian Turkish women who manage the household's cash. When wages, pensions, child benefit, or income from irregular sales of milk or vegetables are obtained, men and women (married or unmarried) hand it over to the senior woman in the family, with the result that a young bride has no cash of her own, even if it is she that sells the products at market. Roubles and dollars (the currency used for savings)⁸² are often stored in wardrobes or suitcases; at the market, women carry their notes in handkerchiefs, worn plastic bags, or tucked into their bra. Just as a husband does not venture into the wardrobe to find himself a shirt, but demands one from his wife or daughter, nor does he ordinarily take cash himself. Women cannot usually refuse outright to give cash to their husbands or older sons, but not infrequently a dispute will arise as to why and how much money is demanded. However, a man who obtains a regular wage retains part of it in his pocket, for travel to work, cigarettes, and occasional personal purchases. When adult men are involved in entrepreneurial activities (planting *sovkhoz* land, collecting and selling scrap metal, illegally distilling vodka) they keep and deal in large sums of money themselves, and their wives or mothers are often unaware of the quantity of their income. But in such cases pensions are always handed over, as is a quantity of cash for housekeeping.

At times of considerable expense although each parent discusses the household's worries about the cost in terms of how he or she (in the first person) will find the money, in practice the burden is shared. And while a man shows usually limited interest in how the household's money is spent, he may participate in decisions over

⁸¹ There are one hundred kopecks in one rouble. At the time of fieldwork the pound sterling:rouble exchange rate was approximately 1.40.

⁸² Lemon notes that the majority of Russia's population's savings is held in US dollars, with the result that more US currency circulates in Russia than in any other country apart from the United States (Lemon 1998:23,41).

the furniture to be bought for a daughter's marriage, and it usually men who decide on the purchase or sale of cattle and cars. Any purchase or wedding gift is made on behalf of the household. Yet they are often spoken of in the singular; both men and women talk of items 'I sold,' 'I bought' or 'I gave.' This is true even when the speaker is not personally involved in the purchase, gifting or acquisition of money.

This further indicates that a person acts as a representative of a larger economic unit, the household. It is through the production of foodstuffs for sale or consumption that the corporate nature of the Meskhetian Turkish household is most obvious. In celebratory and even everyday leisure activities, other relatives play a very significant role, as will be discussed in the following two chapters. But in terms of economic activity, the household is by and large on its own. I shall examine this independence, and the roles of individuals within the household, through the production of vegetables, bread, and dairy products.

Cows

The first person to rise in the morning is the youngest bride. Whether she is the recently married wife of the senior couple's youngest son, or the sole female adult whose children still attend school, it is this woman's task to take a bucket to the shed and milk the cows. Thereafter she drives out (*vygnaet (R)*) the cattle to join the gathering village herd before they are taken to pasture by the day's herdsman. Keeping cattle is labour intensive, and involves considerable cash outlay. Not only must a cow be milked twice a day, but the milk must be processed daily into cream, cheese, curds or yoghurt. The cow sheds are swept out daily, and the cattle fed and watered. In the winter, the feed is hay, gathered by the entire household in one exhausting summer week from fields rented from the *sovkhos*. In spring and summer, fresh grass is supplemented, for the milking cow and her offspring, by *kombikom* (milled wheat or sunflower seeds).⁸³

The cattle must be pastured, either by the household's young men, or, more usually, driven out to join the village herd. Communal herding does not absolve the household of responsibility: either they take turns in the herding rota, each household providing a herdsman for as many days as they send heads of cattle out to graze; or they must pay a herdsman a fixed sum per month. In Oktiabr'skii in 1999 the price per head of cattle

⁸³ This cost 1r a kilo in 2000, although *sovkhos* employees are sometimes able to obtain additional feed for free. A small group of women working with my hostess collaborated in this activity, using a small sack to throw *kombikom* out of the warehouse window when the overseer was not watching. Cows are also fed the vegetable scraps left from preparing meals, and the potatoes that are too small to peel for human consumption.

was 50r; in mid-2000 the villagers agreed to raise the cost to 60r. The cost varies according to local conditions: in a nearby village the herdsman is paid only 20r per head, because 'there are more cattle and more land to herd on.'⁸⁴ The cowherd also receives a bucket of potatoes from each household at the end of the season.⁸⁵ In addition to this organised herding, in mid-summer young men often taken the cattle out to pasture a second time after the herdsman has returned them.

Thus, keeping cows requires significant time and both male (herding, cleaning out, repairing sheds) and female (milking, processing milk) labour. One member of the household must be in the village both early in the morning and late afternoon, to send out, receive back, feed and milk the animals, and thus Meskhetian Turks rarely leave their houses empty⁸⁶. Many rural households do not keep cattle because of these requirements, but almost all Meskhetian Turks do. Given the considerable outlay required (my hosts paid 150r a month for pasturing their three cattle, from a monthly income which rarely rose above 1200r), it is important to understand why they continue to do so. As one man declared, 'Keeping cattle is not profitable.'

Cows do of course provide, for at least eight months of the year, a continuous supply of milk. Meskhetian Turks rarely drink cows' milk, but its products (*kaymah* (cream), *peynir* (cheese), *yogurt* (sour yoghurt, similar to Russian *kefir*) and *çuma* (curds)) are eaten at most meals. These, like the milking itself, are usually made by the household's younger married females. Additionally, these products are frequently sold for cash to neighbours, co-workers, children's teachers, and at the market, thus providing a regular, if small, income for most of the year. As one woman noted 'We always have money for tea, for little things, when the cow has milk. It is in the winter that we don't have a kopeck.' Since tea is one of the few foodstuffs that Meskhetian Turks cannot be without, and which must be served to guests, that it may always be purchased is important.

⁸⁴ The land on which Oktiabr'skii's cattle graze is owned by the *sovkhoz*, which does not charge the villagers for its use. The herdsman moves the herd a considerable distance each day, including a stop at the river.

⁸⁵ Herding is organised entirely within and by the village, mostly through meetings called by word of mouth by the elected village representative, *kvartal'nyi* (*R*). Such meetings agree upon the dismissal of herdsman found drunk and sleeping on the job, and the rates of pay for herdsman. Other questions debated during 2002 included, 'If a household had stopped driving out cattle during the year, or started mid-season (because they bought, sold or ate the cattle), are they still required to pay the bucket of potatoes in November?', and 'How should the payment for the bull be collected, since villagers had not been giving it in at the village shop as previously agreed?' (a large bull is owned by one of the villagers, who is paid for its fertilisation services by all the villagers whose cows benefit).

⁸⁶ This also serves to ensure that someone is always present if guests arrive; see chapter three.

Calves are also kept for their meat, although they are usually slaughtered only for major celebrations. When a wedding is held up to 70kg of meat, the weight of an average year-old calf, is needed. Given that such an animal costs between 3,000r and 4,000r at the market, having one's own is an important way of avoiding expenditure of precious cash at this expensive time. Similarly, if a relative or neighbour holds a wedding and has no spare calf, one's own can be converted into cash. When my host's sister's daughter was given in marriage, her father paid my host 3,000r for his calf, Brezhnev⁸⁷, who became the wedding feast. A cow may also be exchanged to repay a debt, or in part-payment for a car or house, or other major purchase. Cows, therefore, serve as a kind of walking savings account, requiring substantial input but providing regular interest, and a large cash sum if and when required. Indeed the man who said, 'Keeping cattle is not profitable,' added that 'The cow acts like a savings bank (*kassa (R)*).'⁸⁸ Given that the Meskhetian Turks' positive experience of bank accounts is limited to that into which child benefit is paid, this kind of savings account is of considerable importance. And, unlike a savings account at a bank, a cow further protects against the effects of inflation and the unstable rouble, as it would be saleable at the increased cash price were the value of the rouble to drop.

It is notable that the Russian verb *vygnať*, 'to drive out, expel,' used in reference to sending cattle to pasture, is also used whenever the Meskhetian Turks talk of the events of 1944 or 1989.⁸⁹ The same is true of the Meskhetian Turkish equivalent, *katahlamah*, or, as one woman laughed, the more 'attractive' Uzbek *heydamah*. Other scholars have further developed the cattle connection, in stating that during the deportations they were 'loaded up in cargo wagons like cattle' (Aslan 1996:8) or 'herded into cattle trains' (Ray 2000:393). My informants do not themselves usually make this linguistic connection between their fate and the movement of cows. Yet it is clear that possession of cattle has been of significance in surviving and rebuilding ordinary life after migration. One of the few stories told of the 1944 deportation concerned how one man's mother, then a teacher, and father met. It relates to the authorities' distribution of livestock to the settlers in Central Asia, in part in compensation for the cattle left in Georgia (see chapter one).

⁸⁷ Cattle are given a name which is recorded in their passports, used for keeping a record of vaccinations. Meskhetian Turkish cattle share the limited range of rural Russian names; I knew of several cows named Marta. (Cats are also sometimes named, again often with the same name: most of those in my acquaintance were called Markiza). Brezhnev was unusual; he had his name when he was bought and my hosts found it amusing.

⁸⁸ James shows that Uduk farmers treat their cattle 'in a way analogous to our treatment of savings,' although she does not attribute this idiom to her informants themselves (James 1979 98).

⁸⁹ Skultans notes a similar use of the Latvian verb *dzīt* in reference to cattle driven out to pasture and deported people (Skultans 1998.93-94).

'Faria-bibi [his father's sister] and Hasim-aka [her husband] were against them marrying; Faria-bibi was strongly against father marrying mother. When they were being driven out, there were few learned people, so the police told my mother to count the people in each car. She wrote down how many people in each car. Then they told her to write down how many families in each car, so that they wouldn't die of hunger, they gave each family a cow. Hasim-aka said to mother, 'You would do us a great good; write half [of us] as one family, and half as another, so that we will get two cows.' So she wrote that there were two families; they gave a cow to Hasim and his brothers and sisters, and one to his children.'

The man who told this story came to Krasnodar looking for work in 1986. He had previously shared his parents' home with his three brothers and their wives. He paid for the passage of his family, including his wife and four small children, by selling his cow and calf, 'the only things that were really mine.' Now in Krasnodar, irritated once by a comment from an Armenian that Turks always have money, he declared, 'I consider myself richer than Tamara. What does she have to sell if she has to leave? I have a cow, sheep...'

Thus although economic survival is enabled through the continuity of husbandry practices, it further illustrates Das and Kleinman's point that within ordinary daily life are buried memories and experiences (2001:4; see also introduction). Owning livestock and allotments at the expense of other objects and luxuries is in part consistent with Meskhetian Turks' historical farming occupations. As mentioned above, Meskhetian Turkish houses are uncluttered, and this scarcity of objects is partly explained by their losses in Fergana, or the sale of items elsewhere to fund the move to Krasnodar, and partly by their limited employment opportunities in Krasnodar. But, whether or not it is a conscious strategy, most of their relatively few possessions (livestock, crockery, mattresses, gold jewellery) would be saleable were the household to choose or be forced to move again. This attitude is sometimes reflected in celebratory events. One mother, exhausted by ensuring that her daughter was bought all the requisite furniture for her imminent marriage, declared 'I should have bought her gold instead. We don't know when we will be thrown out of here. But people would say I have bought nothing for my daughter. But gold would be better. 'Weight little, value great'.' Her comments reflect usually unexpressed concerns that their residence in Krasnodar may not be permanent. These concerns are also reflected in many men's reluctance to build or repair their Russian houses, as their fathers and grandfathers did in Uzbekistan and Georgia, as they do not know whether their children will live in them (see chapter six).

Vegetables

Many Meskhetian Turks rely on the cultivation and sale of vegetables for economic survival. Some buy onions, potatoes, cabbages, and other produce, either from ports to sell in local towns, or from growers, sometimes trucking considerable distances north towards Moscow to obtain a better price. Some also sell meat, although not to the extent that they deserve the accusation, popularised in a newspaper article, that Meskhetian Turks monopolise meat markets and fix prices (Gusev 2000). Others cultivate the crops themselves, either on their own land, or through renting hectares from *sovkhozy*. One remarkable household of six women lives an affluent lifestyle in Krymsk *raion* on the back of year-round cultivation of herbs in their average sized *ogorod*, with one sister rising at 4am to sell the produce at Novorossisk market (see appendix: map c). Many women supplement their husbands' earnings, regular or otherwise, by selling the products of their own *ogorod*, particularly seed potatoes, tomato and cabbage seedlings in spring; and vegetables (peppers, carrots, aubergines, tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes) according to season. They sell sometimes to other villagers, but often more profitably at the local market. Some take a train from Belorechensk to the coastal town Tuapse three hours away, where prices are significantly higher.

Men, often in groups of brothers, hire land from a *sovkhoz*. A man who lives and hires *sovkhoz* land in Rostov *oblast'* explained how both sides benefit. He rents three hectares of land, 300m by 100m, and employs people to work on it. He has to agree a *plan (R)*: the owner of the land is given one quarter of the produce, and the farmer keeps the rest. Although the proportions vary the principle remains the same: the *sovkhoz* provides the land, seed and tractor work when required, for which the hirer pays cash. At harvest, the *sovkhoz* claims a proportion of the product, or the cash from the sale thereof.

Five men (four brothers and their sister's husband) who live close to each other in Belorechenskii *raion* hired land in 2000 from a *sovkhoz* 100km away. One of the brothers explained that because he had taken one hectare each of watermelons and radishes and half a hectare of carrots, he had been allocated two hectares of tomatoes for free (he did not have to pay for the land, sowing, nor the tractor 'cultivating' between the rows, although half the harvest was to be returned to the *sovkhoz*). In fact this land is hired through middle men, a group of Koreans who took up residence in huts in the

sovkhos woods all summer⁹⁰. The Meskhetian Turkish brothers usually rely on labour hired from the local village to weed and harvest the produce. The workers are Russians with spare time and no regular employment: often school children, old women and housewives looking for extra cash. Since several people employ labour in this way in the summer, the number and quality of labourers that the brothers can obtain depends largely on getting to the village before other hirers. Up to twenty-five workers were apparently available, but the brothers rarely returned with more than six.



2. Men eating by the fields.

At the beginning of June the brothers needed to finish weeding the tomato fields quickly, as the *sovkhos* had declared that if they were not weeded within a week, the land and produce would be forfeited. As the land had been allocated late, the weeds were already dense and frequently taller than the half metre tomato plants themselves. For speed and minimal cost, one man brought relatives to the site to do the work. All spare members of his household came: two teenage sons, eighteen-year old daughter and his sister.⁹¹ In addition, he asked members of his local relatives' households for help, and also took his youngest brother's wife, a cousin's daughter, and his wife's brother's honorary daughter, myself. This use of relatives from other households as labourers is not exceptional. Relatives and, less frequently, unrelated neighbouring Meskhetian Turks, may be asked to help clean a large delivery of radishes for sale the following day, for example, or to assist in the purchase of sunflower seeds from a *sovkhos* (to be later sold to a factory for making into oil) by filling and tying sacks. Such

⁹⁰ Humphrey noted in 1991 that Soviet Koreans maintained their traditional intensive vegetable cultivation by engaging themselves as summer brigades across Russia, it seems that, at least in Krasnodar, this practice continues (Humphrey 1991:12). Note that these Koreans are not from Korea; see Martin (1998) for details of the (forced) migration of Koreans within the Soviet Union.

⁹¹ One woman, on this occasion his wife, had to remain at home to maintain the household and care for his mother.

labour is freely given without expectation of payment or immediate or formalised reciprocal labour.

But weeding the tomato fields, physically demanding and undertaken under temperatures reaching 40°C, represents the limits of acceptable labour demands made of relatives. Lutfia, the man's younger brother's wife, was slightly resentful about working for free. Her husband's brother is also father of her child. When his wife wanted to terminate her fourth pregnancy, childless Lutfia and her husband begged her to give the child to them. Thus she felt more than usually obligated to him. At midday on the first day of weeding, Lutfia sat down before lunch, saying she was tired, feeling sick, and was menstruating. 'He is my husband's brother and father of my child; what can I do? I can't work like this, not in the *ogorod* at home. My father had an *ogorod*, and we used to weed, but early in the morning and late at night.' She worked for two days, but then asked to be taken home. She wanted to return to look after her own *ogorod*; she sells carrots and sunflower seeds at a market on the coast. At this point she and her husband's brother agreed that they would find 1000r so that her household could also hire labour for a hectare of tomatoes, and obtain the profit at the harvest. When word came from home that her husband had sent the money and told her to stay and start weeding their hectare, she burst out, 'Let him go to hell! (*Poshël on von! (R)*) They think I am healthy; I am not. I have low blood pressure, and after eating it's worse. I have the *ogorod* at home, and all is going dry. I'm not going to weed here and let all that go to waste.' Lutfia felt she could not refuse to help finish her husband's brother's hectares, but thereafter she was under no such obligation when deciding how to expend her time and labour for the benefit of her own household.

The men hiring the *sovkhoz* land did very little of the actual weeding work, but rather drove to collect water, labourers and to buy bread; cooked the midday and evening meals; checked on the progress of the weeding, and sat smoking and drinking tea. It was the women and young son who laboured with mattocks for seven or eight hours under the blazing sun. The gendered division of labour was similar in another household when it was necessary to 'clean' (cut the roots and shoots from) seven tons of onions. While the two brothers who had worked the *sovkhoz* land to grow the onions did some of the cutting, their wives and teenage niece and nephew did the majority of the work.⁹² The men tied up the sacks of cleaned onions and carried them to an outhouse, cooked meals, and played cards.

⁹² One of the wives gave birth to her second child (her fourth pregnancy) six days after this task was completed.



3. Cleaning onions.

Such entrepreneurial activities are more common among those without *propiski*, and hence no access to state benefits, pensions, and recognised employment. The proportion of Meskhetian Turks without *propiski* is greater in western Krasnodar than in the east, and it is notable that the residents of these western areas (Abinsk, Krymsk, and Anapa) are characterised as better off than their relatives in Belorechensk and Apsheronsk. Brief observations bear out this generalisation: many more Meskhetian Turks there have cars, imported televisions, Turkish satellites, and larger houses. This disparity is attributed by Meskhetian Turks in both areas to their lack of *propiski* which would entitle them to government recognised but poorly paid work, and hence the motivation to work harder in order to survive. Ahmed, whose wife's relatives live in the west, said 'They all have cars there.' He complained that people in Krymsk learn how to grow crops from when they are knee-high, so when they grow up it is possible for them to grow crops and sell them. He said all of 'us' do government work, or other paid work, and do not earn much, and have not learnt how to grow crops so they do not have the same opportunity. Given that Ahmed keeps an immaculate *ogorod* at home, and his wife has always worked at a *sovkhos*, both here and in Uzbekistan, his lament is unconvincing.

All Meskhetian Turks grow vegetables for household consumption in their *ogorod* (*R*) (allotment). The first planting takes place at the end of March, after the last snow. Between rows of potatoes are planted beetroot, turnips, radishes, coriander, and dill; alongside grow the onions and garlic planted in November. Sweetcorn, grown and dried for use as poultry feed, is planted with beans to act as a stake for the latter.

These are joined in May by tomatoes, sweet peppers and small cucumbers (*ogurtsi* (R)). Many *ogorod*y include patches of strawberry plants, black and red currant bushes; and pear, peach, apricot or cherry trees. However, the *ogorod* is inadequate for growing enough vegetables for a household's needs. Thus the local *sovkhoz* hires out a couple of fields for planting potatoes and sweetcorn. In Oktabr'skii *sovkhoz* workers and pensioners are allocated five *sotok*⁹³ for free; other villagers rent this area for 150r. In the potato fields, a *sovkhoz* tractor ploughs furrows for planting, and, for an additional charge, later 'cultivates' the rows (removing the weeds between the rows of potatoes) and finally turns the crops to expose the tubers for collection. Rows in the sweetcorn field are allocated once the *sovkhoz* has already planted the seed. Villagers generally all plant and harvest their potatoes at the same time. The *sovkhoz*'s division of land following the last snows in March and heavy rain in April is accepted as an indication of the time to begin planting to get the best crop; and people harvest at the same time in order to prevent other villagers stealing their crop. On the day that the *sovkhoz* allocates rows to those who have requested them⁹⁴, the field therefore swarms with more than half of the village's population, armed with hoes, buckets, fertiliser and crates of seed potatoes.

Planting follows a month of preparation, during which the last year's seed potatoes are sorted into those for eating, sale and seed. They will have been stored through the winter in crates, sacks and the stacks characteristic of the Russian winter countryside: piles by the sheds a metre high and two metres long, covered in straw and plastic sheeting in November. Planting and harvesting potatoes and other crops is hard work, avoided where possible by young people; it was not only the anthropologist's legs and back that hurt in mid-April. It is not surprising that many elderly rural inhabitants have bent backs; all cultivation involves leaning over a hoe⁹⁵ and a bucket, and it takes its toll. In planting potatoes, the first crop of the season, fertiliser is first thrown into the rows, and the potatoes, carried in buckets, are then placed a hand's length apart. The rows must then be closed with a hoe. Households work almost solely on their own land. One man shouted at his sons, who were sitting smoking, 'Don't work as if this were a *sovkhoz*! Work the land as one's own [*svoi* (R)].' Yet on potato-planting and harvesting days villagers cooperate in small ways. If one household runs out of seed potatoes they may buy from or even be given spares by other villagers. *Sovkhoz* workers whose

⁹³ One *sotka* is one hundredth of a hectare (*sotok* is the plural over five). *Sotka* comes from the Russian for one hundred, *sto*. When speaking Meskhetian Turkish, Russian grammar is not used, so *bir* [one] *sotok* (rather than *bir sotka*) is heard. Uzbeks do the same in Uzbek (Johan Rasanayagam, personal communication; see also Kandiyoti 1998:565).

⁹⁴ Friday 14th April in 2000.

⁹⁵ The hoe, *kitman*, (*tiapka* (R)) is a metal near-semi-circle, without a hole at the end of a long wooden pole. It is usually the only tool used in cultivating crops: for breaking up earth, digging holes, closing rows, weeding, and finally harvesting.

households are small donate spare land to their colleagues. And when a man's wife is away at harvesting time he may be assisted by others for no more immediate reward than an ice-cream from the village shop.

Among Meskhetian Turks the labour is mostly done by the household which will consume the produce. While most household members, except adult men, help plant the *sovkhoz* field, the rest of the season's planting and weeding is done by women and older girls, with young men only occasionally assisting. While close relatives (geographically and genealogically) sometimes assist, it is normally young unmarried people who do so, and then the connection cannot be relied upon. My host's sister's son resident in Oktiabr'skii refused to help us plant sweetcorn, although in another village, young relatives were more helpful to an elderly aunt and her household. Other labourers are not employed on household plots, and there are no reciprocal labouring arrangements between kin or other villagers.

Vegetables are sold only when they are surplus to the household's consumption requirements. Apart from potatoes, fresh vegetables are usually only eaten in the summer, when cucumbers, onions and tomatoes are sliced for salad,⁹⁶ or aubergines, peppers and carrots are fried together (also known as *salat (R)*, salad). Large quantities of fresh produce are preserved for winter consumption. Tomatoes and cucumbers are 'closed' together in large jars, pickled with vinegar and salt, as are fried aubergines, peppers and carrots. Fruit, which is cheaply available when in season (some people only sell it by the bucket) is prohibitively expensive at other times, and thus much is preserved with sugar to make thick jam, *varen'e (R)*.⁹⁷ Preserves, sweet or salted are eaten throughout the year with bread, particularly when guests visit.

However, it is potatoes which form the basis for the majority of Meskhetian Turkish meals. Most common is soup, *çorba*, made of onion, tomato paste, potatoes, salt, water, and completed with either rice, pasta, home-made noodles, or split peas. If available, carrots, herbs (coriander, purple basil, dill), nettles or wild garlic supplement this recipe. Meat, from calf or sheep, is in plentiful supply following a wedding, when any that has not been used is salted and stored in glass jars, sometimes for months. But meat is usually a luxury, and when used in soup is fried in small pieces. Chicken and fish are similarly included when available. Potatoes are also eaten fried with small pieces of meat, mushrooms (collected from the woods), or just onions and tomato

⁹⁶ Other salads, of finely sliced cabbage and onion; grated carrot with spices; beetroot, potato, carrot and beans; and *alivier*: diced eggs, potatoes, carrots, salami, and peas in mayonnaise are produced for weddings using recipes shared among the southern Russian population.

⁹⁷ The Meskhetian Turkish for *varen'e* is *bal*, which is also the word for honey.

paste. Pasta sometimes replaces the potatoes in this dish, but can also supplement them. Special foods include *mantı*, steamed dumplings filled with potato, pumpkin or meat, and onion; *hinkali*, boiled dumplings usually containing meat and onion, and *aş*, the specific Meskhetian Turkish rice dish, made with carrots and meat. Even *aş* is made with thinly chopped potatoes when no carrots are available. Such special foods are usually made when guests visit, but may be made at other times when a woman has sufficient time.



4. Making *hinkali*.

Except when labouring in the fields, or making the *aş* at weddings, meals are cooked by the household's women, usually by a young bride or unmarried daughter. However, when dough-based foods (*mantı*, *hinkali* or noodles) are planned, it is a married woman, usually the mother or oldest bride, who takes charge. For these dishes, yeastless dough must be rolled out very thinly using a low round table and a long thin pole, a task requiring considerable skill, and one which girls are not expected to learn until they marry. Indeed, the ability to roll out dough thinly to some extent symbolises marriage for girls; it is notable that the first meal a bride must prepare in her mother-in-law's house is *hinkali*. Given their antipathy towards marriage (see chapter four), most girls refuse to learn this skill, despite half-hearted attempts on the part of their mothers to teach them, and save them the embarrassment of being taught by their mother-in-law.



5. A young bride rolling out dough.

Although preparation and cooking of food is almost exclusively a female task, it requires male input. Most meals are cooked on a wood-burning stove, and collection and cutting of wood for cooking and heating is the disliked task of teenage boys. In Apsheronsk, in the foothills of the mountains, saw-mills are numerous, and villagers either buy a load of wood which is delivered by the firm, or obtain it for free, since wood firms are fined if waste logs are left lying around. The timber must then be chopped and stacked. In some diligent households, the winter's needs are cut and stacked before the first snow, but even if this is the case mothers and sisters frequently have to pester their young men to fetch or chop the fuel needed for baking. Often they give up and fetch the wood themselves. Sibling arguments and fights are often based on the refusal of one or other gender to play their roles; carrying out tasks which after marriage, for girls at least, there is much less opportunity to shirk.

Bread

The other foodstuff which is central to the Meskhetian Turkish diet is bread. It deserves separate treatment not only because it is produced from ingredients (flour, yeast, salt) which cannot be produced by the household but must be purchased; but also because 'bread' is symbolic of all food and of the manner in which service of others, residents and guests, is constitutive of the woman's role in the household. Bread stands

conversationally for all food. One is called to eat any meal with the imperatives 'Eat bread!' (*Etmek ye!*) or 'Drink tea!' (*Çai iç!*). The concept of one foodstuff as generic food, representative of all others, is found among other peoples and often, as among the Meskhetian Turks, its designation is a result of its centrality in the diet. Delaney notes that among Anatolian Turkish villagers, bread is also used as the generic word for food; to ask 'Have you eaten?', one inquires 'Have you eaten bread?' (*Ekmek yedin mi?*) (Delaney 1991:243).⁹⁸ Furthermore, as elsewhere the key foodstuff plays a symbolic role not limited to its representation of all food.⁹⁹ Although Meskhetian Turkish bread does not stand for reproduction of the household or the wider community, since (as noted above) the oven or hearth does not symbolise the household and bread-making is not an act mirroring human fertility,¹⁰⁰ it does symbolise human relations within and between households.

Meskhetian Turkish bread, *etmek*, is a round, slightly-risen loaf, the size of a large plate. While there are slight variations in the size of loaves made, or the pattern stamped on the loaf before baking, all Meskhetian Turkish bread is remarkably similar. Most women bake fifteen to twenty loaves every two or three days. The process (mixing the dough, letting it rise, forming the loaves and finally baking them in the oven) takes several hours; the baking alone requires a more-or-less constant presence by the hot stove for nearly two hours. Although in the winter the stove is already lit for warmth, in the summer the heat makes baking itself almost unbearable, and sleeping in the house thereafter similarly difficult. Additionally, during this period the *ogorod* (*R*) (allotment) requires considerable attention, reducing the time available for baking (cf. Kandiyoti 1998:566). Therefore in the summer months many households buy factory-baked loaves. Some households purchase bread throughout the year. But generally, home-baked bread is preferred. This preference is not usually expressed as reflecting the difference of taste between the two types, and nor can it easily be reduced to a matter of cost. While in some areas¹⁰¹ it is cheaper to buy flour, yeast and salt than the factory loaves, in eastern Krasnodar there was little difference in the price in late 1999, and by mid-2000 the price of flour had risen so considerably that it certainly cost more to buy the two sacks of flour a month needed to feed a family of six, than it did to daily

⁹⁸ For the Malays of Langkawi, rice, 'the basic staple and the most important constituent of all meals,' plays a similar role, in that 'cooked rice' means 'food' generally (Carsten 1989:122), indicating that such usage is not limited to that of bread but occurs with other staple foods.

⁹⁹ Kahn illustrates that in Wamira, Papua New Guinea, traditionally grown taro (as opposed to imported goods) is exchanged 'strategically to increase and manipulate status' since it alone is 'capable of symbolically communicating male status and virility' (1998:30,42).

¹⁰⁰ As it does for other southern European peoples (Delaney 1991:243, Pina-Cabral 1986:44).

¹⁰¹ In Sal'sk, Rostov *oblast'*, loaves cost 4.5r in early 2000, while flour cost no more than in Apsheronsk.

purchase Russian bread at 2.30r a loaf. Despite this most Meskhetian Turkish women continue to bake bread.

Bread is treated with considerable respect. It must stand right way up; if noticed upside down it will be turned. When I asked why, one girl responded, 'Would you like to be put on your head?' Bread must not be wasted. It is stored wrapped in a cloth in a metal bin, and stays fresh for two days and edible for at least three.¹⁰² Even if unfit for human consumption, it must be fed to a living creature, usually the dogs that guard the house or sheds. The tiny crumbs of bread swept up following a meal are separated from the dirt that goes into the stove, and added to the dog's basin. If bread is found on the road, even when pulverised by traffic, it is taken home for the dogs, as 'it is forbidden to throw out bread.' And bread certainly must not be trodden upon.¹⁰³ Dropping bread is said to indicate that guests will shortly arrive (see chapter three).

The importance of bread beyond its role as basic foodstuff was illustrated when Sultan hosted a visit of her daughter's future in-laws, and prepared an impressive variety of special foods, including *hinkali*, boiled dumplings of meat and onion. The *hinkali* were very white, and the fine quality of the flour, and hence its price, were noted. But at the last moment Sultan realised that she had forgotten to make bread. Her husband's paternal aunt later summarised the neighbours' thoughts: *Etmek her bir şey'dan birinci!*, 'Bread is first before everything!' The significance of this statement was illuminated by a disagreement between brothers' wives over the baking of bread. Gulnara talked about her married home in Uzbekistan,

'Nobody else made bread. There were two other brides, and they didn't make bread. I lived there ten years, and I made bread for ten years. I was pregnant with my son, and about to go into labour; I waited to take out the last bread [from the oven] before going to hospital. They made soup, that was all; it was me that made dough, for *hinkali* and the like. If I didn't make dough they wouldn't have bothered.'

Three weeks later the issue arose with the other two brides, in a heated discussion over how much bread one of them, Zerifa, had made in Uzbekistan.

¹⁰² Shop-bought loaves dry out within a day.

¹⁰³ Similar practices are found elsewhere in Europe: among the descendants of Greek refugees from Turkey, in Anatolian Turkish villages, and in the Polish mountains (Hirschon 1989:137; Delaney 1991:243 and Ruth Mandel, personal communication; Frances Pine, personal communication).

Gulnara said that her daughter does not know how to make *hinkali*. Zerifa asserted that her mother-in-law would teach her; this was how she had learnt to make bread. Zerifa declared that she had made bread for two or three years, after Gulnara had given it up. Gulnara responded, 'What are you saying? I don't remember.' Gulnara pointed out that Zerifa had been ill, and that she, Gulnara, had been working hectares¹⁰⁴ and bought Zerifa a dress with the money. Zerifa initially said that Gulnara had not worked hectares all that time, at which Gulnara got more annoyed and said 'Look at my work record! (*stazh (R)*).'¹⁰⁵ Eventually Zerifa worked out that she had made bread 'a whole summer, half a year.' Gulnara said, several times, 'Maybe three or four times, but not all the time,' but Zerifa disagreed. Once Zerifa had left, the third woman agreed that Zerifa had not baked bread for that long.

Undeniably, making and baking bread is hot, tiring and time-consuming work. But this discussion concerned more than proving who had worked the hardest. She who bakes the bread, feeds the household; she also feeds the guests. When Müştel, her husband's cousin, sought to persuade Gulnara to agree to her daughter's marriage to a neighbour's son, he said to her, 'I can argue with your husband, I can scold him, but I can't with you. I have eaten your bread.'

Baking bread is what women do. When the master-of-ceremonies at a wedding invited the neighbourhood's women to dance, he called for bride's mother's friends, the women 'who bake bread, who help out,'¹⁰⁶ that is, those who *kızmet olıyırler*, 'serve.' When a woman marries, as she stands before all the guests in the marquee at her husband's home with her head still covered with a large red scarf, loaves of bread are tied with a scarf around her waist, and rice put in her hands. This is done *kızmet olsun*, so that there will be service, or, 'so that there is always something to put on the table for guests.'¹⁰⁷

Thus a central aspect of a married woman's role in her household is to provide for others, both resident and visiting. This provision is symbolised in bread, both in narrative and in practice. When a Meskhetian Turkish woman bakes bread she

¹⁰⁴ Planting, weeding and harvesting *kolkhoz* (collective farm) land.

¹⁰⁵ A written record of years worked, on the basis of which is calculated the age at which one may receive a pension.

¹⁰⁶ Wedding bread is usually baked by neighbours; the host household provides all the ingredients and the fuel. The quantities baked, in the hundreds, are a source of pride and muted competition.

¹⁰⁷ This understanding is shared by other Turks in the squatter districts of Istanbul: "to serve" (*hizmet etmek*) in one's home is inextricably bound up with status; "to be served" is an honor. Women serve their husbands, their children, and their guests' (White 1994.42).

reiterates her membership in her household, and in the Meskhetian Turkish community. Müştel reminded Gulnara that, since her marriage, 'what she does' is to serve her household and her guests, and that this has always been symbolised by bread. He appealed to her role as provider, and particularly as provider for guests, a role she plays often and well. The respect due to bread also reflects the respect due to women, as Müştel notes when he declares that he cannot argue with Gulnara because he has eaten her bread.

This respect to some extent balances that shown to men. Whenever a man enters a room or house, the women present stand until he has sat, and sometimes until he tells them to sit. This occurs in most households even when the man in question is the girl's brother or father, or woman's husband. It symbolises the higher status attributed to men.¹⁰⁸ One man asserted that when a baby boy is born, according to their faith he is automatically older than a woman aged one hundred-and-fifty. He followed this by explaining that if a woman wants to go somewhere, she cannot do so without a man's permission, be that her husband, father, or even son, depending on who is present. But he concluded, 'Of course, nobody does this.' While women generally do not ask their husbands for permission to travel to the market, or even to visit nearby relatives, it is within a man's authority to prevent his wife from travelling anywhere. That such refusals rarely occur demonstrates the negotiated nature of such relationships within the household. It is not at all uncommon for women to argue with their husbands, and girls to shout at their elder brothers. However, such behaviour is limited to within the household. With guests or other Meskhetian Turks the respectful service aspect of a woman's role is highlighted, symbolised practically by bread and visibly by the headscarves always worn by married women, and put on by all adult women when they leave the house.

It is for these reasons that Gulpaşa's reference to baking bread, in the story related at the beginning of this chapter, is so significant. The grounding of a traumatic event by reference to an everyday productive activity highlights just how abnormal her move was: it interrupted the baking of bread, a core task in a woman's day, and the feeding of the family. The story also demonstrates the Meskhetian Turks' pragmatic approach to extraordinary events: Gulpaşa took the dough with her, and baked the bread at her mother-in-law's house. It reminds us that, while life-changing, displacement does not result in immediate loss of culture, or in chaos. On the contrary, in responding by doing what she always does (bakes bread) Gulpaşa continued with the everyday activities

¹⁰⁸ The significance of related status in interactions between Meskhetian Turks is discussed further in chapter three.

which, in diaspora, both enable economic survival but also, equally importantly, maintain the patterns of roles and relationship within households.

Kin and Money

As demonstrated above, kin may be called upon to provide resources without payment. I have discussed the use of relatives' labour, which is usually forthcoming, but over which another household has no absolute claim, regardless of the kinship relationship thus activated. Labour from others who are not close relatives is even less likely to be available. Several people from my host village, including members of my household, felt that the man whose tomatoes I helped to weed should have paid me for my labour. Indeed, the only occasion on which I was asked about my feelings about being in Russia was when this man asked how I 'feel inside' about helping out in the field, at his home and in Oktiabr'skii. 'Isn't it hard?' His reference was not to the physical or emotional demands, but to the fact that I was working without payment.¹⁰⁹ Note however that while washing and bundling fourteen sacks of radishes late into a cold March night, or bundling up tomato seedlings, only provides income for the household which has requested the labour, such activities do provide an opportunity for women to gather and talk, share news, and delegate their own household tasks to someone else for the evening.

Kin sometimes give goods as well as labour to one another. An overflowing bag of aubergines and peppers, still expensive at the market in the early summer, is given to a woman visiting her husband's aunt; and small sacks of onions and carrots are sent back with a visitor to Rostov relatives. Often such goods and labour are given in what can be described as 'demand sharing.' Among the hunter-gatherer Hadza of Tanzania, Woodburn identifies 'demand-sharing' as a central aspect of distribution, primarily of meat, but also of other desirable items (Woodburn 1998). Such goods are simply demanded, and the donor has little control over the 'giving' as he or she cannot refuse. The hunter (donor) receives little benefit from sharing. Indeed, as Woodburn demonstrates, sharing is not necessarily reciprocated, and is not therefore a strategy for ensuring one's future comfort.

¹⁰⁹ At this point my status as kin was still ambiguous. Later, however, this man's sister complained when I was preparing to leave their household to return to Oktiabr'skii to help with another wedding. 'Who are they to you? They are just neighbours. We are your relatives. Stay here, you don't need to go back.' She was offended when I laughed that they were as much my relatives as she was. Her perception of my relatedness was, I suggest, in large part because I had laboured with them, and with my hosts in Oktiabr'skii, to whom she is related.

Meskhetian Turkish sharing-on-demand is illustrated by the redistribution of photographs. Of Meskhetian Turks' few individual possessions, photographs are most valued. Men's photo albums are often mementos of their Soviet army service, filled with pictures of themselves in uniform and with comrades. Like those belonging to women, they also include pictures of their classmates. But the majority of pictures are of themselves, and of relatives as children or at marriage. All are posed, many taken in photo studios or at places in resorts decorated as backdrops to photographs. The value of these albums is illustrated by the fact that they are the items most often mentioned as left behind in the flight from Fergana. Photo albums are brought out to show visiting relatives, who frequently demand a couple of the pictures. Even after returning from the field I continue to receive demands (not requests) that I reprint photographs already reprinted several times over, since my friends' relatives had visited and removed pictures from their treasured albums.¹¹⁰ One young woman went to the extreme of gluing her wedding photos into an expensive album, and slightly damaging them in the process. This did not prevent visitors from asking for the photos, nor her from 'giving' them away.

Other goods are similarly demanded and provided by relatives. While it could be argued that what is occurring is a delayed form of reciprocity, in many cases what is 'shared' is unequally distributed and the donor does not expect that the demander has items worthy of return demand. For example, three months after giving birth, Mariam stopped breastfeeding her daughter and instead collected two litres of cow's milk each day from her husband's mother's brother's household. At the time, Mariam's cow had not given birth, but even when it did, over two months later, Mariam initially continued to collect or send for milk, on the basis that her daughter didn't like the taste of her cow's milk. Only when her embarrassed husband forced her to stop was the baby required to adjust to her household's dairy products. Despite the fact that Habila, Mariam's husband's mother's brother's wife, had begun selling what was left after the calf and her husband's grand-niece had had their fill, at no point did Habila complain that Mariam was using the milk, nor suggest that she make payment. On another occasion Habila complained for weeks that her husband's sister's husband had not brought them crates of tomatoes that he had been growing on *sovkhoz* land, until he at

¹¹⁰ On numerous occasions I was able to, or invited to, participate in an event because I took my camera with me. I had initially intended to give pictures to my informants, but after several were taken, without asking, by the sisters of my host's daughter's new husband, my hosts insisted that I be less naïve and sell copies. Whenever a new film had been developed, all demanded to see the pictures, and choose which they would have, and any suggestion that certain pictures be reserved first for the couple whose wedding they depicted were scorned. There was no question as to whether or not I would be willing to sell the pictures; debate only surrounded how much I should charge.

last produced them. Despite having no involvement in the cultivation, Habila felt that she had a right to this free source of vegetables.

Woodburn notes that 'rates of consumption are extraordinary as people apparently seek to maximize their shares by eating more (and more rapidly) than others' (Woodburn 1998:52). Everyone usually gets their share, but they have to *claim* it, and others will go to some lengths to avoid a share being claimed (ibid:55). The same is true of the consumption of scarce and therefore special foods among the Meskhetian Turks. While the etiquette of visiting restrains guests from eating excessively during visits, as soon as guests have left the hosts enthusiastically devour whatever remains. The same is true of meals at which no guests are present but when certain special foodstuffs (cake, fried eggs, meat) are available. All eat quickly in order to obtain more before others do.¹¹¹ Similarly, when my host sister fried eggs with wild garlic she ate quickly and made no attempt to publicise the fact that the food was available, but when a share was demanded she did not, and could not, refuse (cf. James 1979:98). Similarly, when a distant relative noticed sacks of potatoes in the corridor he asked Habila whether she had spare. She denied it, saying she had barely enough for her own seed, since she wanted to sell them to other villagers. She could only get away with such a denial as he was an infrequent visitor, and would not learn the truth. But she could not tell the truth (that she wanted to sell them for cash) since kin have a right to make such demands.

This last example demonstrates the limits of Meskhetian Turkish demand sharing. When a cash transaction is involved, kin beyond the household no longer have a right to claim, without payment, the item or labour in question. During the same period that Mariam was claiming Habila's cow's milk, Habila bought herself a second-hand dress for 250r. After wearing it a couple of times, she concluded that it really was too big, and sold it to Mariam, who is substantially larger, for 300r. Mariam could not immediately make payment but did so four months later, taking the money from her husband's wages. When I joked that Habila was profiteering, she laughed that she was only doing what Mariam's mother-in-law does. The latter buys clothes in Krasnodar city and sells them for a higher price to villagers in Oktiabr'skii. Thus the sharing relationship between kin explicitly does not involve monetary transactions. If an item has been bought with money, in order for it to transfer to a relative the latter must pay in cash. The same is true of items which would otherwise be sold for cash if they were not taken by kin. For example, when the man mentioned above (page 75) was seeking meat for

¹¹¹ When I returned from fieldwork my partner complained that I ate very quickly, and that he had to eat as fast in order to ensure he obtained a fair share.

his daughter's wedding feast, and agreed to collect his wife's brother's calf once he had found 3,000r to pay for it, the latter's daughter later complained that by that time it would be worth more, 4,000r. Astonished, I exclaimed, 'It's your sister's wedding!'¹¹² Her father said with a laugh, 'The pocket is separate!' As discussed above, cattle are raised and valued in large part because they can be sold when significant sums of money are required. Although the milk from such an animal may be demanded, this is only a by-product of the larger 'savings account' which may not be demanded beyond the household. Thus a distinction is made between labour or time freely given to relatives, and money never shared beyond the household (cf. Campbell 1964.41-42, 99).

Although holding money in common in a Meskhetian Turkish household does indicate the corporate nature of this related group, the *exchanges* that involve money (which occur beyond the household) equalise kin and non-kin, in that they deny any special qualities of relatedness in the realm of daily economic activities.¹¹³ However, in the celebration of marriage, money is given to kin in significant quantities. During these events, money plays a very different role from that in the subsistence activities of daily life, and rather than denying the special nature of relatives, money helps to create them, and the community temporarily acts like a household. This role of money in the creation of kin is examined in chapter four.

The limits of kinship support

As discussed, Oktiabr'skii *sovkhov* (state farm) plays an important role in villagers' daily lives. Housing is no longer provided free by the *sovkhov* for its workers, but land and services are, and most other villagers can also access these benefits for a small fee. The *sovkhov* also provides, for all villagers, a bus to the voting station at election time, and until the end of 1999, it was the *sovkhov* bus that took children to and from the town school.¹¹⁴ While the *kvartal'nyi* who organises the herding meetings is not, now,

¹¹² Female sisters and cousins are both called *baci*. See chapter three for more on kinship terminology.

¹¹³ White's analysis of small scale production activities among women in Istanbul indicates an opposite use of money, in that payment of money is said to make relatives of workers and employers who are not members of the same household (White 1994.120). In this case the idiom of kinship makes such activities acceptable, since it implies participation in the same sort of web of indebtedness that characterises other kinship relationships.

¹¹⁴ The town authorities took over this service at the end of 1999, as it became too expensive for the *sovkhov* to buy the necessary fuel. Other villagers suffered, however, as the *sovkhov* school run used to provide an additional and sometimes free (depending on the whim of the driver) daily bus service into town.

attached to the *sovkhoz*, it is *sovkhoz* land used, for free, by the herd. Similarly hay fields are provided for a small cost to all villagers, not only to *sovkhoz* workers.



6. Working for the *sovkhoz*.

Co-operation between individual villagers is vital in maintaining the cash flow of individual households. Just as the village shop sells goods on credit, to be paid for on pay day, so villagers provide each other with milk, potatoes, and illicit *kombikorn* without immediate payment, but with the knowledge that debts will be repaid when a household's pension or wages are received. It is a rare rural household that is never in debt to another, and financial indebtedness is not a cause of embarrassment, nor does it entail other obligations. Indeed, other villagers sometimes act, like cows, as walking savings accounts. When a tractor driver for the *sovkhoz* who owns his own vehicle received 6000r wages (a very considerable amount of cash) he lent most of it to other villagers within a couple of weeks. Not only did this remove the need to store considerable sums of cash, and prevented his household from quickly spending the money, but it allowed for access to the income when needed, as there is little doubt that the debts will be repaid. Other villagers actively helped him to 'save' by unashamedly asking for loans when they heard of his good fortune.

For the most part, Meskhetian Turks make a point of not forgetting debts, which in part stems from religious injunction. One should pay off any debts before the *bayram* (holiday) at the end of the Muslim fast, Ramazan. Debts of a non-monetary nature are also acceptable but also must be paid back. In the context of Ramazan, any days on which one has not fasted, because of travel, illness or menstruation, count as a debt to Allah, which must be repaid by the equivalent number of fasted days either after

Ramazan Bayram or before the beginning of the next year's Ramazan. I discuss the further significance of monetary and non-monetary debts in chapters three and four. But although Meskhetian Turks pride themselves on repaying debts, in practice they are neither more nor less reliable than other villagers when it comes to repaying money owed, and debts are neither forgotten nor repeatedly mentioned by either party. Meskhetian Turks also share the wider sense that the state is just as obligated to repay its debts. When in December 1999 mothers finally received their first child benefit payment for two years, it was considered a payment of the amount owed to them for the preceding six months. Rather than the sudden payment being welcomed as evidence that the authorities had found money to start allocating the benefit again, the remaining eighteen months' payments were still considered to be a debt that the state would eventually repay,

Just as households are not obliged to give their close kin money or items of monetary value, nor will one household take responsibility for another's debt. As I left the field, I was owed a fairly significant amount of money for some photographs I had had printed. The wife of the brother of the head of the household in question, while encouraging me to visit the offenders, said self-righteously, 'I have paid you back. I don't owe you anything.' The only exception to this lack of shared obligation is the debts that may remain after a person's death, which must be demanded of the deceased's sons before the body is buried. Even in this case the debt is unlikely to go beyond the household, as it will be paid by the son resident in the deceased house.

Loans may be made by relatives. Indeed at the time of greatest financial need, the hosting of a wedding, it is presumed that relatives will be the first to assist. However, just as goods that have a realised or realisable cash-value may not be demanded of relatives, nor are kin obliged to loan their relatives money to the detriment of their own household's activities. Habila, whose consanguineal relatives all reside in Azerbaijan, reported that three weeks before her daughter's marriage, she had woken at four o'clock in the morning worrying about the wedding. She did not know whether to go to work or to do things at home to prepare. Her biggest problem was that she needed *borc*, loans, but she has no relatives nearby. Habila's husband's father lives only twenty minutes away, but gave only 450r, which can only partly be explained by his second wife's refusal to give money to his children.¹¹⁵ Her husband's sister, living in the same village, was said to be unable to help because she was buying a house for her son and his wife. Other men, related through her husband's father's sister, refused to

¹¹⁵ This kind of female control, and lack of duty towards relatives, is unusual, and was explained by the Meskhetian Turks as being because she is a Crimean Tatar.

help, excusing themselves because they were buying a car, or had no money. In the end, the bulk of the cost of the wedding was lent by a Meskhetian Turkish neighbour (\$100, approximately 2,700r), and Habila's husband's employer (a loan of 2,000r); and received as the *harc* from the new in-laws (see chapter four) (2,000r) and rent-in-advance from their resident anthropologist (4,000r). The former two sums were repaid over the following six months, leaving the household little to live off.

Other households are more fortunate in that the host's siblings, part of the group seen to be acquiring or giving away a bride, live nearby, and consider the cost of the wedding to be in part their responsibility. Beyond this small circle, such loans are indeed loans, and will be repaid. While it is expected, despite evidence to the contrary, that relatives are most likely to loan, in some cases people would rather not borrow from their kin. The sister of a bride's father said 'We do not want to take debt from relatives.' 'Why?' She responded, embarrassed, 'You wouldn't understand... we once asked him for money and he didn't give.' On further questioning, she admitted that the man in question is the son of her mother's sister, the richest Meskhetian Turk in the region. 'We struggled and struggled and he lived well. We don't want people to know that we have taken debts, so they will think it is our own money.' This antipathy towards indebting oneself to kin may explain the bride's father's complaint that, 'We did not want to give her this year. A good family, that is no question. But we did not want a wedding this year. Last year I took debts, and I have just got money back in my pocket; I want to feel the money there. Now we have to take debts. Our relatives were telling us to give her all the time. We had it up to here!'

Bloch argues that among the Merina of Madagascar economic cooperation is far more common among non-kin than among kin because it is the former relationships that need to be worked at in order for them to be maintained. "Artificial" kinsmen are called upon to help with agricultural work before 'real' kinsmen. "Real" kinsmen would always come, they said, 'artificial' kinsmen would only come if one kept up the typical kinship behaviour of repeated requests for help. If one did not do so these 'artificial' kinsmen would lapse' (Bloch 1973:79). The conviction that 'real' kinsmen would always come is based, according to Bloch, on the fact that kinship is moral, and that 'the crucial effect of morality is long term reciprocity and that the long term effect is achieved because it is not reciprocity which is the motive but morality' (ibid:76). In reference to my material this argument is attractive, not least because experience of the Meskhetian Turks demonstrates that it is indeed non-kin who provide the majority of economic assistance. It is also consistent with the practice of demand-sharing, in which kin

indeed have a moral obligation to share when asked, although I have shown that what may be shared is limited.¹¹⁶

A development of Bloch's insistence on the moral nature of kinship is seen in Carsten's work on the Malay fishermen of Langkawi, who prefer to fish with non-kin rather than with kin. Here it is not so much the fact that kin can ultimately be relied upon to assist because of their moral obligation towards one another that leads them to develop relations with non-kin by fishing together, but rather that fishing is seen to be hierarchical, temporary and individualistic, and hence antagonistic to the egalitarian, permanent, *moral* relationship felt to exist between kin. Yet the money earned from fishing is vital for maintaining the household and other kin relationships. Malay men solve this dilemma by passing the money earned in this sphere to women, who, due to their association with the house, 'the central symbol of kin unity,' symbolically 'cook' earnings, imbuing them with the ideals of kinship (Carsten 1989).

What the Meskhetian Turks share with Carsten's Malays (1989) and Bloch's Merina (1973) is a view of kin as morally obligated in spheres other than the economic survival of the household. The clash of morality and economic activities was illustrated by one man's assertion that, despite the benefits of working for the local Meskhetian Turkish entrepreneur,¹¹⁷ he could not work for a Turk because he could not argue with him, as he does with his present employers. The moral requirements for respect between even those Meskhetian Turks who are not related would prevent the usual banter between employee and employer which, for this man, made subordinating himself to another and working for low wages bearable. This suggests that economic activities are inimical to the morality of kinship.

The problem with the application of Bloch's argument (that it is opportune to work with non-kin because kin will ultimately be morally obliged to assist anyway) to the Meskhetian Turkish case is that, although they hold the ideal that kin can ultimately be relied upon, in practice this is not actually true. The manner in which kinship, lauded as the only really reliable network of information and advice, in fact fails as a good character reference or support for the practical needs of the expansion of kin is discussed in chapter four. In this and chapter five I further show that kin *do not* provide individuals with non-tangible support in cases of personal and communal suffering. In this chapter I have demonstrated that in terms of economic support, kin are also not

¹¹⁶ How Meskhetian Turkish kin are defined, in principle and in practice, is discussed in the following chapter.

¹¹⁷ The particular benefit in this case was that the man in question ran a registered and thus taxpaying company, and therefore his workers are registered as 'working' in the state sense, which entitles one to state benefits. See chapter six.

reliable. Meskhetian Turks pragmatically accept this, even if they do not verbally express it, in not undertaking economic activities in partnership with kin except within households. Those kin who do work together, most notably in farming *sovkhoz* land, are almost exclusively either members of the same household, or brothers who have previously lived as the same household.

Beyond Economic Survival

The Meskhetian Turkish household relies on village systems of debt and labour sharing,¹¹⁸ and on the services and land of a village *sovkhoz*, to maintain and increase its income and production. Although occasionally the household's labour and physical resources are supplemented freely by those of kin, for the most part relatives are not relied upon for economic survival. When households interact economically with relatives¹¹⁹ the nature of the interaction differs little from that of exchanges with non-relatives, whether or not the latter are Meskhetian Turks. However, while kinship is insignificant in maintaining daily household existence, in other contexts it is kin, and not the present village and villagers, with whom one identifies and with whom one interacts. How and why this is so is examined in the chapters that follow.

I have illustrated the productive, labouring activities expected and constitutive of membership in a household. Consumption, on the other hand, is not constitutive of household membership in the same way. In daily life, while food should be provided whenever men demand it, and everybody may eat together, in practice people of both genders eat at the low table, often in front of the television, whenever the food is ready and they are present. People do not wait for others before eating, even at a meal prepared for the birthday of someone not present, although special items (particularly pieces of meat or cake) are sometimes saved for absent household members. Co-consumption *is*, however, a core element in events which maintain relationships and create new ones, as will be examined in the following chapter.

¹¹⁸ Particularly in cattle herding. Werner describes a similar practice, for herding sheep, in Kazakhstan (Werner 1998 605).

¹¹⁹ Other than in cases of co-labouring brothers, which can be interpreted as cooperation between persons formerly of the same household.

3. Being and Staying Related

As noted in chapter two, although household members are all kin, and membership of a household is signified by participation in the productive activities (on the land or wage-earning) of the household, other kin are classified as being outside this corporate unit. It is usually on neighbours, who are not necessarily kin, and on public collectivities, such as the *sovkhoz*, that Meskhetian Turks must rely for economic support in daily and even ritual life-cycle activities. However, kin beyond the household remain the focus of the Meskhetian Turkish leisure and ritual social activities. Relatives are central to social life beyond the village. Discussions between close and distant relatives or neighbours revolve as much around deaths, births and marriages of other relatives as around the extortionate price of flour and the size of this year's potato harvest. When watching wedding videos, one's brothers, sons, daughters, their children and grandchildren are pointed out to anyone who does not know them. Discussion of relatives occupies a considerable part of any conversations with Meskhetian Turks other than one's immediate household. The positioning of kin over non-kin was demonstrated by a woman exasperated at the bickering of two Russian neighbours, who each complained when the other was in her house,

'What difference does it make to me who comes round? You're not my *rodnoi* (*R*) [born relative]; you're not my mother, my sister. I do not tell you my secrets, what I want and need. I would tell my sister whether life is good or bad. What difference does it make to me who comes round?'¹²⁰

Although the boundary between kin and non-kin is clearly made in statements such as the one above, in practice it is blurred and even fluid. But it is being 'kin,' in a variety of ways, that gives persons status and social position.

The lack of fit between anthropological categories and the lived experience of being related has led some to question the value of 'kinship' as an analytical category or tool. Leach argued that in Pul Eliya, 'the kinship system is not a 'thing in itself' (Leach 1961:146). Needham expanded the application of this argument, asserting that everywhere kinship 'does not denote a discriminable class of phenomena,' and that, therefore 'there is no such thing as kinship, and it follows that there can be no so such thing as kinship theory' (Needham 1971:5). 'Kinship,' like 'marriage,' may be useful as an odd-job word, but since the assumption, that all phenomena covered by the term

¹²⁰ This was said to me rather than to the women concerned. The use of 'you' in such circumstances commonly does not actually refer to the listener.

have something in common, is false, it is of no real use in analysis (ibid:7,30). This was followed by Schneider's (1977,1984) critique, in which he argued that kinship, as an analytic category, is of little value. Not only has its usage been 'inconsistent' and 'chaotic,' but its definition, 'in terms of the relations that arise out of the processes of human sexual procreation,' is drawn from European folk perceptions (Schneider 1984:5,68,175). The problem with kinship is therefore that this assumption, associated with a perception that relationships of blood, birth or biological relatedness are self-evidently of high value, has been applied uncritically to the study of other cultures, with 'a rigid refusal to attempt to understand what may be going on between them' (ibid:123,196).

Schneider's critique prompted an examination of the supposedly 'biological' or 'natural' basis of kinship in both European cultures and elsewhere (Strathern 1992, for example). This provided an opportunity for the consolidation of gender and kinship studies, given that, 'because both build their explanations... on these presumably natural characteristics, both retain the legacy of their beginnings in notions about *the same natural differences* between people' (Yanagisako & Collier 1987:34). As a result, 'the anthropological study of gender in the 1970s and 1980s in many respects encompassed the study of kinship' (Carsten 2000:19).

An alternative approach to the problem of kinship as an analytic category has been to examine what people do with kinship, rather than what kinship 'is' (Carsten 2000, Schweitzer 2000). Schneider himself identified this distinction as the difference between his own early use of 'kin' and that of his informants, but he seems not to have thought it possible to redefine 'kinship' in this way (Schneider 1984:72). As Bourdieu notes,

'To point out that kin relationships are something people make, and with which they do something... is radically to question the implicit theory of practice which leads the anthropological tradition to see kin relationships 'in the form of an object or an intuition,' as Marx puts it, rather than in the form of the practices that produce, reproduce or use them by reference to practical functions' (Bourdieu 1990:167).

This 'functional' analysis of kinship should not be confused with the older functionalist approaches. It does not rely on either the Malinowskian view that kinship is 'an institution whose function is to meet the needs of reproduction' (Schneider 1984:134), or Radcliff-Brown's assertion that 'the *raison d'être* of an institution or custom is to be

found in its social function,' and that the function of kinship is social integration (Radcliffe-Brown 1950:62, quoted in Schweitzer 2000:14-15). Rather, it asks 'what do people do with or against kinship?' (Schweitzer 2000:14).

The study of kinship in this sense demands that one examine local practices of being related, rather than relying on pre-given definitions of what or who is kin. The term 'relatedness' has been adopted in order to 'broaden the comparative frame,' allowing anthropologists to show that being kin is 'composed of various components - substance, feeling, living together, procreation, emotion,' among others (Carsten 2000:34; Peletz 1995:348). Societies use many metaphors of being related, and to highlight one of these (often that which informants assert is the only one) leads to a misleading representation of what it means to be related (Strathern 1972). By taking a broader view of relatedness one is able to examine forms of affiliation which informants do not explicitly define as kin and which are excluded by definitions reliant on terms such as descent, affinity, kindred, consanguinity. But, as Carsten argues, 'if we are to reject kinship in the sense which Schneider criticises, then we would do better to adopt a term to characterise the relatedness which people act and feel. I would call this kinship' (Carsten 1997:290). I therefore use kin and relative, and kinship and relatedness, interchangeably.

But the terms used to analyse kinship in the past retain their usefulness in the study of relatedness, if the analyst does not assume their value for her informants, as Astuti shows in her identification of three 'transformative stages' of relatedness among the Madagascan Vezo. She demonstrates how the kinship perspectives of a Vezo through youth, old age and entombed death may be labelled kindreds, cognatic descent groups and unilineal descent groups. In so doing, she shows that different perceptions of relatedness may exist contemporaneously for those of different ages within the same society (Astuti 2000). Descent and affinity, kindreds and lineages remain a useful part of the anthropological language for talking about kin and relatedness, and they thus appear in this thesis.

The approach advocated by Bourdieu, Carsten and Schweitzer, and followed in this thesis, enables us to show that who kin are and what they do varies according to context. Additionally, it allows for an awareness that kinship practices sometimes lead to 'social disintegration' as well as positive dividends, and that kin may be actively forgotten as well as chosen (Schweitzer 2000:15; Bodenhorn 2000, Carsten 1995, Edwards & Strathern 2000, Nuttall 2000). In this chapter I therefore discuss how Meskhetian Turks situate people as kin and non-kin and how they maintain

relatedness. In the following chapter I examine how relatives are made and the role of existing kin and non-kin in these processes. In both chapters, I am interested in relatedness as a means for maintaining continuity of practice and community following displacement.

Situating Persons

Describing how a mullah in particular, but also people in general, should live, one man said, 'You should not look at women. That is, you should look up when someone approaches, to see whether they are a relative or not your own [*tuzhoi (R)*], and then look away. You need to look to know whether to greet them; if it is a relative she will be offended and say, 'That mullah walked straight past me' if you do not greet her.' Although the speaker was particularly discussing how the sexes should relate to one another, his comments point to the importance of greeting relatives,¹²¹ and, by extension, the absence of greetings exchanged with anyone who is 'no-one.' Indeed, strangers are met with blank stares, and all enquiries as to who they are, are addressed through the known intermediary. People are then introduced by their relationship to the speaker, rather than by personal name. If strangers do converse, say at the market, or waiting in a bus station, they soon situate one another through enquiries regarding to whom they are related.

'No-one' (*hiç kim*, or *nikto (R)*) is a person who is not treated as a relative; he or she may be, for example, the Meskhetian Turk whom one sees but doesn't know when visiting one's aunt in another village. 'No-one' and 'relative' are sometimes talked of as mutually exclusive categories. However, as will become clear in this chapter, a person who is 'no-one' is a potential relative, and hence potentially important, just as a relative is a potential no-one. Additionally, someone with whom affinal links can be traced may also be referred to as 'no-one.' Thus 'no-one,' like *ciger* (relative), is a fluid term depending on context and whether or not the speaker wants to be seen as affiliated to the other.

But the concept of 'no-one' only refers to *bizim şennik*, 'our people'; that is, other Meskhetian Turks. Russians and other peoples are by definition of little social significance because they cannot be relatives. This is partly explained by the fact that they are usually not Muslim. When I asked how I could become a Meskhetian Turk I

¹²¹ This requirement extends to written greetings in letters. I am frequently chastised by one informant and told that so-and-so is offended because, in a previous letter, I forgot to send greetings to him or her individually.

was told, 'You should marry a [Meskhetian] Turk because that means you accept our faith'. But some non-Muslim women do become relatives, in the sense that they marry Meskhetian Turkish men,¹²² and have children who are considered to be Meskhetian Turks. In some cases these women convert to Islam and learn Meskhetian Turkish, but I know of no circumstances in which this arrangement has either not resulted in divorce, or been fully accepted by the Meskhetian Turkish relatives.

One such household, of a Russian mother and Meskhetian Turkish father, with two daughters and one son, used to reside in Oktiabr'skii. After the couple divorced, the mother continued to live in the area, although in a different village, and travelled to Turkey to buy goods which her younger daughter sold on in Apsheron'sk market. The woman was criticised for this practice, since 'we do not leave the children for one night.' Other Meskhetian Turkish relatives put pressure on the younger girl to visit them in Belgorod, with the explicit intention that she would marry there and not become 'like a man' like her elder sister, who travels to Turkey to work in a hotel. Another woman whose son married a Russian woman was far more critical of such an arrangement, and considered that her grandchildren by him 'don't count' because of their Russian mother.

The only people who do marry Meskhetian Turks with relative frequency are Kurds. Many Kurds were deported with the Meskhetian Turks to Central Asia in 1944; they are also Muslims and their language is said to be very similar to Meskhetian Turkish. However, my informants derogatively consider Kurds to be 'our Gypsies.'¹²³ One popular card-game is called *Kurtler*, 'Kurds,' in which the losing pair are called Kurds. The name is also used as an insult, when somebody does something stupid. A woman who had come with a groom's party to collect a bride stole a *piala* (a small tea bowl) and a spoon, and walked away laughing, holding them high and bashing them together. Several people demanded, 'What kind of custom (*adaŋ*) is this?,' and remembered that the same woman had been criticised at her own son's wedding for

¹²² I know of no cases of a Meskhetian Turkish girl marrying a Russian man, although I suspect that some of the occasional illegitimate pregnancies, of which I know of two that resulted in children, may have been fathered by non-Muslims. In late 2000 a scandal reverberated around Apsheron'sk when it was heard that a Meskhetian Turkish girl had run off with a Russian man. They were found drinking soft drinks together in a café at midnight. Although the girl was almost certainly untouched, the Russian man offered to marry her. Her family decided against it, and the girl remained at home. She is now highly unlikely ever to marry unless a suitor appears from far enough away not to have heard about the scandal. The role of relatives and scandal in marriage choices is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

¹²³ One woman reported on an encounter on a local train. A Russian woman asked her, 'What nationality are you?' She replied, 'Turkish.' The Russian said, 'You can't be those other people are the Turks. You don't look like the Turkish singers we see on the TV. They are more attractive.' My informant replied, 'No, we are the real Turks. They are Kurds. Like you have Russian Gypsies, they are our Gypsies.'

repeatedly telling the crowd of women to be quiet. After the bride had been taken, there was further condemnation of the woman and repeated scornful mention of her being a Kurd. In fact only her mother is a Kurd, and others later noted that the stealing of a *piala* is also an old Meskhetian Turkish custom.

But several men have taken Kurdish wives, and marrying one's daughter to a Kurd is acceptable, although not particularly desirable. The parents of four girls only gave their youngest daughter to an insistent Kurd after they had turned down an offer from a Meskhetian Turk because the girl's older sister was not yet married. Eventually, they gave their youngest daughter to the Kurd on the basis that it is better to have one girl married to him than to have two left unmarried at home. Nevertheless, Kurds are not seen as *bizim şennik*, 'our people,' and hence usually are beyond the bounds of those who may be considered relatives, or conversely, 'no-one.'

Hence to be 'someone' is both to be Meskhetian Turkish and to be related. This is illustrated by the fact that most people are both referred to and addressed using a kinship term, sometimes in association with their personal name.¹²⁴ Brother, *kardaş* (*tada*, or *aka (U)*)¹²⁵ (elder brother), in address), refers to immediate siblings, cousins, and children of one's parents' cousins; the same is true of *bacı*, sister. Mother and father are *aba* and *baba*,¹²⁶ and daughter (*kız*) and son (*oğlan*)¹²⁷ also mean girl and boy. *Kız* in particular continues to be used well into a woman's married life, by her husband, mother-in-law, own parents and siblings.¹²⁸ The terms for patrilateral and matrilineal relatives differ only at the level immediately above ego. Father's brother is *emi*; mother's brother is *tayı*; father's sister is *bibi*, and mother's sister, *hala*.

¹²⁴ All Meskhetian Turks have one personal name, usually given at birth by the paternal grandparents. On the birth of her first child, Guldasta was angry that her father-in-law named the girl Yıldız, meaning 'star,' after his deceased sister. Although Guldasta felt the name to be was old-fashioned, because 'they put on the name' (*onlar koydiler*) there was nothing Guldasta (nor her husband, who had wanted to name the girl after his own deceased sister) could do to change it. Both her mother and her mother-in-law reported that their in-laws named their children, and the former laughed at her daughter's complaints about not being able to name her own child.

¹²⁵ Note that *aka*, elder brother, has been adopted from Uzbek to make a distinction between older and younger brothers not otherwise present in Meskhetian Turkish. Turkish does make the distinction possible: *kardeş* is brother, and *abi* is older brother. *Kız kardeş* is sister, and *abla*, older sister. Note that in Meskhetian Turkish *abla* is brother's wife.

¹²⁶ Father may sometimes be called, or referred to as, *aka*, or even *tada*, both usually used to address a brother. There is often some explanation for such usage. One man's grown children all call him *tada*, because they grew up hearing his brother and sisters calling him *tada*. His younger brother's son calls him *büyük baba*, usually reserved for grandfather, possibly because the child has no surviving grandfather.

¹²⁷ Pronounced *o/a* in the vocative.

¹²⁸ Elsewhere in Europe women are called 'son' by their seniors, as 'daughter' is felt to be insulting (Michael Stewart, personal communication). In the Meskhetian Turkish case, the continued use of a term signifying low status (young, female and unmarried) reinforces a woman's lower position relative to men and her seniors.

Grandparents on both sides are *ana* (grandmother) and *baba* (grandfather, literally 'father'); *büyük baba*, 'big father,' is sometimes used.¹²⁹ Terms for grandchildren (*turun*) and nieces and nephews (*yegen*) are the same matrilocally and patrilocally, and for both genders.

Those who marry into one's kindred are often still referred to as *gelin* (bride) and *enişta* (bridegroom) twenty years after marriage.¹³⁰ In the case of the bride, this could be seen as a linguistic reminder that she is an outsider, as *gelin* is assumed by some scholars to be derived from *gelmeh* ('to come') and to mean 'the one who came' (White 1994:44, Johan Rasanayagam, personal communication).¹³¹ In address, these are sometimes, but not always, altered to *abla* (brother's or uncle's wife) and *aka* (elder brother). The couple themselves address their spouse's relatives as if their own. This is true for all generations and both sides of the marriage, including the parents.¹³² Referentially, however, other terms are used. Parents-in-law are *kaynata* (father) and *kaynana* (mother). The spouse's brother and sister are *kaynı* and *gurime*. The latter gives rise to the proverb *Gurimem geldi, ölümüm geldi*, or, 'When my husband's sister comes, my death comes.' In practice relations between women and their brothers' wives are usually amicable, perhaps because few share a household. The wives of brothers are known as *eltiler*, and address each other as either *bacı* (sister) or *abla* (brother's wife). The husbands of sisters are *bacanahlar*, this term is rarely used since they have far less contact than *eltiler*, who, even if they do not share a house, usually live close and labour together. The use of the same terms as one's spouse points to the integration of newcomers as kin, and the conversion of previously non-kin affines into relatives, as will be discussed further in chapter four.

For the families of the married couple, the new relatives are collectively known as *dungurlar*, although in address respectful terms (*aka*, *tayi*, *bacı* or *hala*) are always employed. Although the specific term used is in some cases variable, what is important is that all are addressed using a suitable kinship term. This is respectful since it implies that the listener is one of us, or at least not 'no-one.' This practice is usually

¹²⁹ Occasionally *aba* gets the same treatment, one young man differentiated between his 'little mother' (*kuçuk aba*) and 'big mother' (*büyük aba*).

¹³⁰ The continuity of usage of the term 'bride' long after marriage, in reference to any woman who has married into the family, is common to other post-Soviet peoples, including Armenians and Russians

¹³¹ Thanks to Johan Rasanayagam for noting this connection, which is also found among his Uzbek informants. However, others assert that this is a folk etymology and that *gelin* is not derived from the verb 'to come,' but from *gelik*, an old term for 'hearth' (Ruth Mandel, personal communication).

¹³² The requirement for a bride to address her husband's mother as *aba* often leads to tension as is further discussed in chapter four. Her husband is similarly supposed to address her mother as *aba*, but their separate residence and limited contact makes this both avoidable and less significant

extended to those who are only related through marriage (as when an aunt's husband is known as *aka*), or those seniors who are not related at all.¹³³ It is however notable that the terms used in all these cases (to a child's in-laws, to relatives through marriage and to non-relatives) is drawn from the matrilineal pantheon, usually *tayi* (mother's brother) and *hala* (mother's sister).¹³⁴ This is notable since it is patrilineal relatives that are said to be most valued, although this is not always so in practice (see below).

Knowledge of kinship terminology is thus vital for understanding who is being talked about. But it is equally important to comprehend how people interact with one another. As Jacobson-Widding states in reference to her work in Zimbabwe,

'since, in any society, the kinship terminology is basic to the identification of the Self in relations to the Other, since it is by kin terms that children learn how to relate to their most significant others, there is reason to believe that the kinship terminology is conducive to their conception of themselves and to the formulation of ideas about social personhood...children themselves are treated as the representatives of a kinship category, already from an early age' (Jacobson-Widding 1997:71).

Among the Meskhetian Turks, reference and address through the idiom of kinship reflect the practice of interacting with people on the basis of their position as a relative to others, rather than as freely associating individuals.¹³⁵ As discussed above, those who are not (presently) relatives are dismissed as 'no-one.' It is as a related person, therefore, that one counts as someone. Further, it is according to one's related status, which includes one's gender, age, relative seniority and marital status, that one interacts with others. Beyond the household and close village associates, people interact with and make opinions about one other on the basis of this status to a far

¹³³ Similarly in Russian children address older men as uncle (*diadia*) or grandfather (*dedushka* or *ded'*), and women as aunt (*tetia*) or grandmother (*babushka*, or *baba*), followed by their personal name. However, although adults refer to old men and women in these terms they do not call their peers 'brother' and 'sister.' When speaking Russian with their neighbours, Meskhetian Turks follow this usage.

¹³⁴ The exception is *aka* (elder brother), but this is an import from Uzbek and could similarly be seen to imply slightly lesser status than a patrilineal term.

¹³⁵ In interactions with non-Meskhetian Turks, Meskhetian Turkish names are Russified, usually using the diminutive Russian form used between friends and relatives, for example Raia (Reihan, Ruveida), Katia (Kibna, Kabila, Hanifa), Alk (Alizhon, Anvar), and Igor' (Ibrahim, Ismail). This partly in acquiescence to others' unfamiliarity with Meskhetian Turkish names. But as important is that knowing one's personal name, as opposed to kinship relation is relatively unimportant among Meskhetian Turks, and since non-Meskhetian Turks are not involved in these valued kinship interactions, it is enough for them to know and use the simplest Russian names.

greater extent than they do on the basis of a person's individual characteristics, temperament, intelligence and skills.

Mauss made the distinction between the person (*personne*) and the self (*moi*) in a lecture delivered in 1938 (Mauss 1985[1938]). Carrithers later clarified the distinction between the two categories, stating that, 'the *personne* is a conception of the individual human being as a member of a significant and ordered collectivity,' while the *moi*, self, is a 'conception of the physical and mental individuality of human beings within a natural or spiritual cosmos, and interacting with each other as moral agents.' Carrithers recognised that the two narratives of person and self could be 'deeply at odds' (Carrithers 1985:235-6). Although Mauss' evolutionary examination of 'person' is problematic, as is a strict distinction between the individual and the role they fulfil, an awareness of such a distinction is useful in understanding Meskhetian Turkish practices, and their responses to the events through which they have lived.

Interaction on the basis of gender is one example of the distinction made between one's role as a related person and one's individual characteristics; the most significant factor in this respect, that women are seen to be of lower status than men, was discussed in chapter two. For men and women status is also achieved through seniority, and the existence of a number of sons. All elderly people are due respect on account of their age. Households with a resident senior member generally have more visitors, as other junior relatives travel to visit their elders. Many elderly men, and a few women, are active in their practice of Islam and are thus additionally respected within the community for their devotion. But although an elder man has considerable influence within his own household and in respect to the actions of his other sons (and brothers, if he is himself an oldest son), beyond this group the respect due to him as an old man does not entitle him to speak for others. This relates to the absence of hierarchy in relations between Meskhetian Turkish households. It also explains why although the Meskhetian Turks have several 'leaders,' they cannot be said to speak for anyone but their household and siblings' households, and do not serve as a focus for Meskhetian Turkish communal political mobilisation. Unlike elsewhere, where ideals of equality have enabled minorities to resist authorities' attempts to 'divide and rule' them (Stewart 1997:1999:41-42), the Meskhetian Turkish absence of hierarchy has meant that they have not united politically to counter discriminative moves by Soviet or Krasnodar authorities, Uzbeks or Kuban Cossacks.



7. *Dedeler* (elderly men) at a wedding.

Although one's gender and seniority affect how one behaves, it is rare that one's kinship status does not also mediate this behaviour. Thus while all girls and women should wear skirts below the knee,¹³⁶ and adult women should cover their heads with a *kasinka* (*R*) (headscarf),¹³⁷ it is acceptable for unmarried women to use only a thin and translucent rectangular scarf (*sharf* (*R*)) and to only wear this when visiting or shopping. A married woman who felt it was stupid to wear a proper *kasinka*, and who removed it at the market and in her mother-in-law's presence, was severely criticised by other woman. Yet her husband's widowed sister attracts no comment for not covering her head at home at all.

The importance of public interaction according one's position as kin becomes particularly clear when the accepted norms are contravened, as the refusal of adult brother and sister to talk to one another, despite living in neighbouring villages in Belorechensk *raion*, makes clear. Leyla lives with her two sons, after her husband was sent to prison for killing a man. Some say that he was a violent and demanding man, and on returning home drunk one night he beat up a neighbour, who died shortly afterwards. Others assert that he had found his wife with the neighbour, who declared that 'She is more my wife now.' Leyla now has a male Russian 'friend' who helps her financially, and with whom she stays periodically. Leyla's brother Rasim refuses to talk to his sister, apparently because she 'walks' (*guliaet* (*R*)) with a Russian lover. Rasim's wife explained that this is forbidden for a Meskhetian Turkish woman, and that 'it would

¹³⁶ Some feel it is acceptable for girls to wear trousers to school.

¹³⁷ The Meskhetian Turkish for headscarf, ' *tavşal* ' is usually used only to refer to the very large squares of material worn by old women.

be better for her to say that she wants to marry, and for her relatives to organise a wedding to one of her own.' From this point of view, it is shameful for Rasim that his sister behaves thus, given that one's behaviour always reflects one's relatives. The only way for Rasim to keep his own and his household's name clear is to completely disassociate himself from his sister.

But Rasim may have been involved in the events that lead to the neighbour's death. Following the murder he went on the run for a year with Leyla's husband, with whom he was good friends. His resentment may therefore have much to do with the disruption to his own life and the loss of a friend. Furthermore, as children, Leyla and Rasim never got on. Leyla told of an occasion when her brother refused to carry 10kg sugar back from the market because he was angry that she had been given the money instead of him. Another time he shot her with his father's shot gun, and was later angry with Leyla for the beating he received for the act. Following her husband's imprisonment Leyla was left to bring up her children alone and had to rebuild parts of her house with the help of neighbours because she had little help from her kin. When her brother saw her up a ladder repairing the roof he beat her. Leyla therefore resents Rasim for failing to support her as a brother should, and for not treating her with respect.

It is clear that the failure of both to fulfil their role as gendered related persons has led to the complete breakdown of their relationship. Leyla's association with non-Meskhetian Turks may be explained by the fact that she is not supported by her kin. But Leyla is not only contravening the proscription on a woman sleeping with a man to whom she is not married, and the Meskhetian Turkish expectation that unmarried women (whether divorced, widowed or never married) live with their relatives. She is also acting as an individual, according to her own desires and feelings, and having no regard for the position or opinions of her relatives.¹³⁸ Despite her outcast position her actions continue to affect her kin as was demonstrated when the relatives of a man hoping to marry her sister's niece (who lives several hours away) did not return for further marriage negotiations. It was later learnt that they had heard of Leyla's reputation, which thus tarnished that of her relatives.

The emphasis on a person's role over the individuality of the self, in Mauss' terms, is clearly illustrated in marriage, which is arranged between persons representing their kindred with little regard to the couple's individual characteristics or desires, as will be

¹³⁸ In fact, she is proud of her independence. She was learning to drive, and told me 'With us Turks, women aren't drivers. I am the first one! We Turks don't take risks. They are afraid. Only I take risks. You've got to risk a bit.'

examined in chapter four. The inappropriateness of individuality, specifically in relation to the expression of personal emotion or suffering, will be further discussed in chapter five.

All are the same, but some more than others

Meskhethian Turks pride themselves on how many *cigerler*¹³⁹ (relatives) they have, referring usually to both male and female patrilineal and matrilineal kin, including affines. Kin are usually recalled by relationship, or by place of present residence, rather than by name. One man described his relatives as a 'battalion,' spread through Kazakhstan, Batumi (Georgia), Tashkent (Uzbekistan); and Krasnodar, Rostov, and Belgorod (all in Russia). His mother had three brothers and one sister, his father had eight or nine siblings. Another declared that if I drew all his relatives, his male and female cousins, it would fill two of my exercise books. He began to list the children of his brothers and male cousins, not counting the ones on his mother's side, nor his sisters' children, nor the relatives he did not see and hardly knew. Four here, six there, two here... he concluded with a laugh that if we added them up, he is related to almost all Meskhethian Turks.

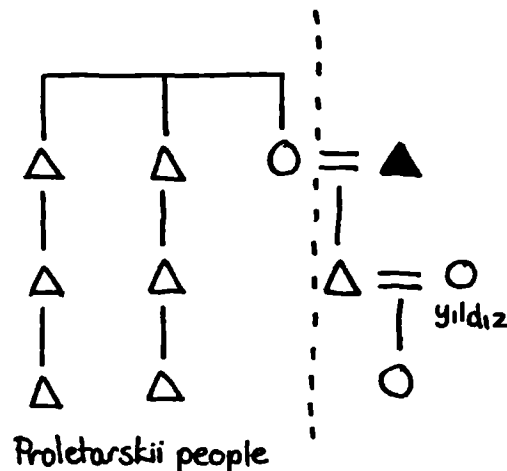
Relatives are counted both matrilaterally and patrilaterally, and all are, at least in theory, equally valued. 'In our ways, a distant relative is the same as a close one; there is no difference.' That is, anyone who is known to be a relative is treated with the same regard. That this is true beyond at least immediate siblings was demonstrated during a conversation held with three women preparing for a wedding feast. They reported that together they are six sisters and three brothers, now spread across the former Soviet Union (Uzbekistan, Baku (Azerbaijan); Novorossisk, Stavropol and Krasnodar (Russia)). Five of the sisters and their mother had come for the wedding, of their uncle's son's daughter. One reported, 'My Russian neighbour was amazed that we travel all this way for an uncle's son's wedding. I laughed; they are the closest of relatives!'¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ *Cığır* means liver or lungs in Turkish, and is sometimes used as a term of endearment. I am not aware that Meskhethian Turks refer to internal organs as either *ciger* or *cığır*.

¹⁴⁰ Note that this was the wedding of a daughter, which is less prestigious or important than that of a son, and therefore (male) relatives are less likely to attend. Learning that a female relative was about to be taken in marriage, one man reportedly said, 'We're going to the *ogorod*. Let them come, let them take, I'm going to the *ogorod*' (*Biz ogoroda gidergeyaz. Gelsen, Getursen, ben ogoroda gidegam*). Female relatives, however, will still travel to the wedding of a girl because their assistance is still needed to prepare food.

When I suggested that blood, in this sense, came from both parents, Alihon was adamant, 'No, only from your father.' Alihon's words implied what is made clear elsewhere in practice, that maternal kin are not as important as paternal relatives. One explicit example of this is the result of the practice that a woman joins her husband's household on marriage. For many middle-aged married women, this, combined with the circumstances of post-1989 displacement, means that they have not seen any of their consanguineal kin for nearly a decade, as the latter often live in another country. Their relations, their children's matrilineal kin, are less important for their children, in part because they are very rarely, if ever, seen¹⁴².

The importance of the father's side was discussed with Yıldız and her daughter. They were talking about 'the Proletarskii people' who live in a nearby village, Proletarskaia, and are relatives of Yıldız's husband, but through his mother (her brothers and their families), rather than his father.

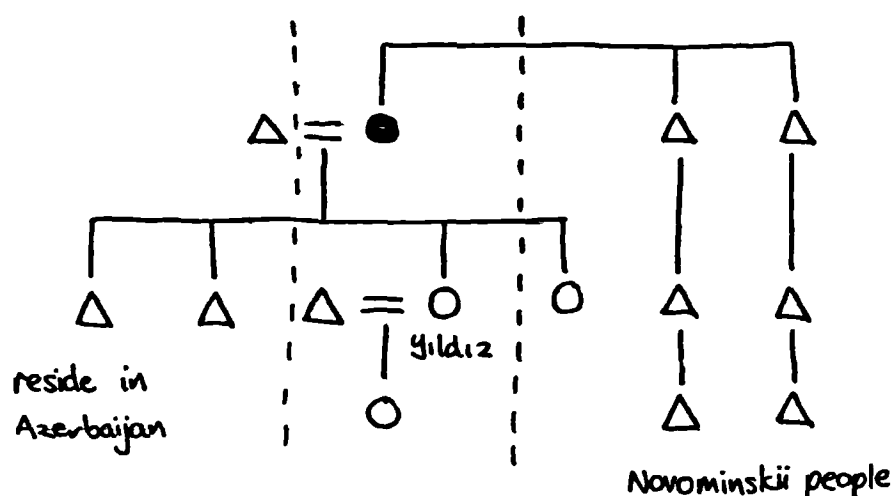


9. Yıldız's husband's relatives in Proletarskaia.

Yıldız said, 'They are the mother's relatives, not his [her husband's] relatives. Relatives through a mother count as relatives, but distant. The Proletarskii people are his mother's side, not his. We really have no-one close here.' Then, directly contradicting what she had just said, she talked of 'the Novominskii people' as 'ours' while talking to her daughter. The relatives in Novominskii are Yıldız's sister, and relatives of her deceased mother.¹⁴³ Thus, according to her previous statement, they do not count as 'ours' (at least for her daughter), because they are relatives through the mother, as much as are the Proletarskii people whom she had just dismissed.

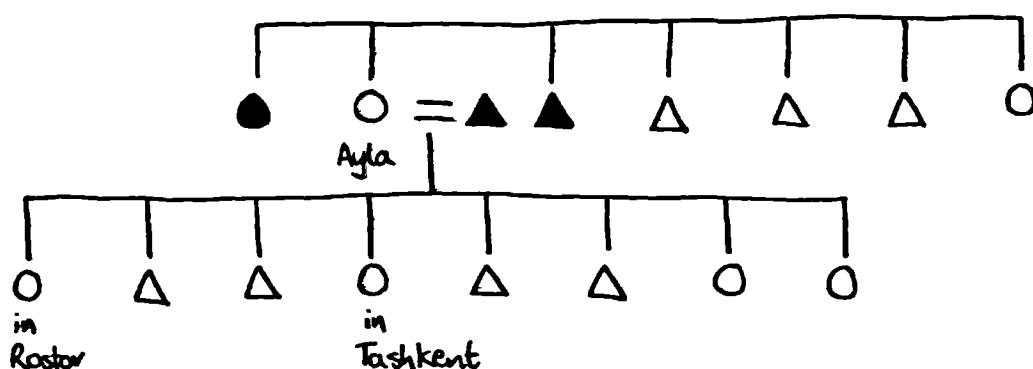
¹⁴² The importance of maintaining relatedness through visiting is discussed further below. Weddings often provide the occasion for the meeting of geographically distant kin, but matrilineal relatives may be unable to travel (if they need a visa, or considerable money to travel), or be less interested in travelling to the wedding of a daughter's kin.

¹⁴³ Yıldız's father and other siblings live in Azerbaijan.



10. Yıldız's mother's relatives in Novominskii.

Yıldız's contradictory narrative demonstrates that while certain statements ('all relatives are equal,' 'relatives through a mother are distant') may be considered true in theory, displacement¹⁴⁴ has led to patterns that do not fit the rule. Yıldız's husband and his brothers (and their families) moved to Apsheronsk with their mother, and with his mother's relatives ('the Proletarskii people') because their father died in Uzbekistan prior to 1989. Yıldız's husband's relatives through his father, the theoretically 'real' ones, are still in Uzbekistan, and are effectively unknown by his children. Similarly, four adult brothers living in three villages in Belorechensk *raion* moved there with their mother, Ayla, in order to 'let mother be with her brothers.' In this case all of Ayla's six siblings' families live in Belorechensk. Yet Ayla's husband's relatives (hence her sons' father's relatives), and one of her daughters, still reside in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and are rarely seen.



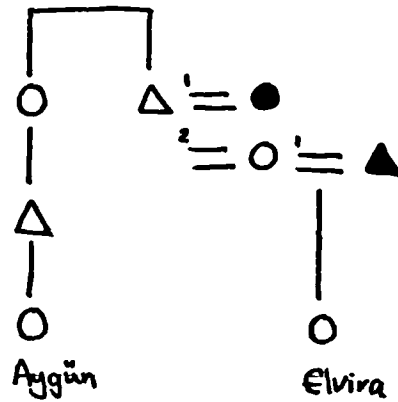
11. Ayla's siblings and children. Except where stated, all reside in Belorechensk *raion*, Krasnodar.

¹⁴⁴ It is probable that other factors have influences decisions over where to live and that displacement is but the most obvious (and most acceptable) reason why practice does not fit principle.

Thus, while the ideal model of post-marital residence remains firmly patrilocal, in reality, contemporary residence is often determined by which of the elder generation remained alive in and after 1989, among other practical considerations. While brothers do generally, but not always, live close together, the senior generation of living kin is sometimes that of their mother, rather than the ideally more valued patrilineal kin. How much this residence pattern was true before 1989 I cannot say. Given the repeated dispersal of the Meskhetian Turks throughout the last two centuries (see chapter one), it is probable that in practice habitation patterns have frequently differed from the ideal of patrilocal residence. It must also be remembered that the sisters of these groups of matrilocal brothers remain patrilocally resident with their husbands, and their husband's relatives, spread across Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Post-1989 matrilocal residence is still rare, and when it does occur, I suggest it does so largely among the sons of women who are old enough to have been born in Georgia, and whose husbands died before the family left Central Asia. Ultimately, this practice demonstrates that, while it may be felt that 'relations through a sister do not count,' relations through living kin are stronger than those through the deceased. This in turn fits with their lack of knowledge of their great-grandparents' names and kin, and their disinterest in their historical past (see chapter one).

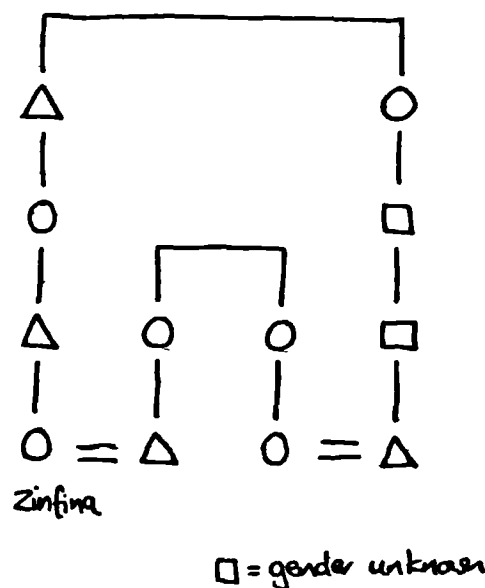
Sisters

The second of Ismail's points is that affines, *dungurlar*, are regarded as less close than consanguineal relations. To illustrate this, the relationship between Elvira and Aygün is instructive. Elvira is the daughter, from a former marriage, of Aygün's paternal grandmother's brother's second wife. Elvira herself told me several times that 'Aygün's grandmother is my *bibi* (father's sister),' but on other occasions Aygün said, 'Elvira is no-one to us.' Elvira was seven when her mother remarried, and Aygün's grandmother is not her father's sister but her stepfather's sister. She is neither attractive nor popular, and has a reputation for stealing. It is understandable that Aygün, an attractive and popular young woman, would wish to accentuate the divide between the two of them, while Elvira was desperate to fit in.



12. The relationship between Aygün and Elvira.

Later, Aygün explained how her cousin Zinfina and Zinfina's husband are related. Zinfina's father's mother's father's sister's great-grandson's wife's mother's sister is her husband's mother. Aygün added that because they are related through marriage the kinship relationship doesn't really count. Although the intermediate relatives were not directly involved in arranging the match, the fact that they have kin in common explains why they previously frequently attended the same weddings (a usual site for a man to choose a future wife), at which she caught his eye. While the relationships in both of these examples may not 'really count,' in both cases Aygün began by saying that the people are related, and illustrated that she knew the nature of the relationship, going back several generations. Both suggest that such relatedness is not entirely dismissed.



13. The relationship between Zinfina and her husband.

In practice, the extent to which relationships through married sisters 'count,' or are activated, depends on a number of factors (geographical distance, local density of

Meskhethian Turkish population, agreeable characters), as much as the success of relationships through brothers or fathers also depends on other factors. Ravşan, who lives with his wife and two children in the same village as his parents and brother, is a notable example. Despite residing close to his immediate kin, due to an earlier conflict with his parents over housing, Ravşan and his wife socialise mostly with her sister and brothers' families, in other nearby villages. Ravşan also hires and farms *sovkhoz* land with his wife's brothers, rather than with his own.

A further complication is the manner in which a married woman talks of 'our' relatives, meaning her husband's relatives. This was demonstrated above by Yıldız's comment, that 'we really have no-one close here,' specifically in relation to her husband's father's kin. At the same time, a woman does not see her own kin as no longer hers, as, again, demonstrated by Yıldız, in talking of 'our' relatives, her sister and mother's kin. While women talk in this way of both their consanguineal and affinal kin, I did not hear their husbands do the same. Again, this must in part relate to patrilocal residence, since a married woman spends most of her time with her husband's kin, particularly now that her own kin may be in a different region if not country.

Affines thus may be described as 'kin,' and hence theoretically equal to all other kin, but in other contexts they are said to be 'no-one,' potentially but not presently kin. But their absence from the definition of 'official' kin rarely reflects their actual role as 'practical' kin (Bourdieu 1990). Or, to put this another way, 'jural rules' and 'statistical norms' are not the same thing. In many cases, including that of the Meskhethian Turks, informants' stated principles of relatedness remain relatively unchanged throughout years of practice which is contrary to the principle or where the ideal practice only occurs when it becomes 'unavoidable in extreme circumstances' (Leach 1961:9, Bourdieu 1990:175; see also Campbell 1964:56, Eickelman 1989:160-161).

Given that rules and norms do not neatly mirror one another, to focus only on the language of kinship as emphasised by informants can result in a misleading understanding of the practice of relatedness. It is for this reason that Stafford criticises the overwhelming representation of Chinese relatedness as ruled by the 'lineage paradigm,' arguing that other forceful and incorporative systems operate alongside ideals of patrilineal descent. He discusses the obligation on children to return *yang*, the care received from their parents in childhood, to their parents (or parents-in-law, for women) later in life; and the cycle of *laiwang* in which relatedness between neighbours is developed through reciprocal small acts of commensality, gifts of money and shared responsibilities. He concludes that,

'not surprisingly, the reality is that in China, as elsewhere, people *make* kinship - it is, of course, never simply 'given' to them by birth, and patrilineal ideologies, however powerful, are forced to compete in a crowded field of ideas and about the ways in which relatedness is produced' (Stafford 2000:52).

Furthermore, as has been shown for people in Sri Lanka and China, it is possible for relatedness to be practised according to a concept of (patrilineal) descent - the idea of ties between father and son and by extension between ancestors and descendents - without the presence, or the practical significance, of a patrilineal lineage (Leach 1961:10, Watson 1985:16).

The extent to which all kin (including affines and matrilineal kin) are involved in a household's daily life depends largely on geographical distribution, and, in daily interaction, on the characters of neighbouring individuals. As elsewhere, 'kinship' serves as a moral language for evaluating relationships and for interacting with others. Leach demonstrates that what is being talked or thought about are 'rights and usages with respect to land';¹⁴⁵ Watson shows that an ideology of relatedness allows for 'maintaining a system of class privilege' (Leach 1961:146, Watson 1985:173). Here I argue that the Meskhetian Turkish language of kin simply provides a framework for talking about those with whom one interacts, with the result that the 'rules' that informants used to define kin infrequently fit the actual relationships.

Despite my informants' occasional assertions that kin are a particular set of people, in practice those considered to be related vary according to context. Kinship is performative, in the sense that those who act according to the moral standards expected of kin are those with whom one continues to relate, and thus be related. It is also expansive, as relatedness is not restricted to those so defined by degrees of consanguineal distance. Thus the relationships which have value in daily and ritual life may not be defined by their participants as being between kin, but nevertheless have a particular moral quality (Bloch 1973) which shows their function to be like that of relationships explicitly defined as kinship bonds.

¹⁴⁵ Leach further asserts that 'kinship systems have no 'reality' at all except in relation to land and property' (1961:305). While I agree that a kinship *system* is not a 'thing in itself,' I disagree that kinship is *only* significant in relation to land. On the contrary, as I argue below, in some cases relationship to territory is a way of talking about relationships between people, rather than the other way around.

Villages

Such a form of relatedness is the Meskhetian Turkish association by *kūv*. A *kūv* is a small town or village;¹⁴⁶ in this usage it refers specifically to those in Georgia, from whence they were deported in 1944 (see appendix: map d). The *kūv* name refers to the people descended from the residents of the village.¹⁴⁷ It is formed by adding *-li* to the village name.¹⁴⁸ Murat Bogali is Murat of village Boga. On marriage a woman joins the *kūv* of her husband. As one woman explained, 'The woman always goes to the man's side.' This is true of both actual residence (patrilocal marriage) as it is of symbolic residence, in the husband's *kūv*. However, just as a woman continues to consider her consanguineal kin to be her relatives, so people still know of, and mention, a mother's *kūv* as distinct from a father's. But her children only belong to their father's *kūv*.

The *kūv* is used to identify people: one Yusuf is distinguished from another by his *kūv*. Indeed one of the early questions asked of a stranger, *Siz nere'den?* (literally 'Where are you from?') is an enquiry about one's *kūv*, not one's present residence.¹⁴⁹ Whenever a person's name is listed, such as in the record of gifts given at a wedding, it is done by name and *kūv*, for example 'Murat Bogali - 100r.' This practice is extended to non-Meskhetian Turkish wedding guests, in that their gifts are also recorded by name and village association, only in this case the village is the present one. Thus the gift given by Ivan, a contemporary neighbour, is recorded as 'Ivan komşumuzı (neighbour) - 50r.'

Members of *kūvler* are said to have specific characteristics. For example, at a wedding, one Bogali woman whose daughter recently married a Gagvili, said 'Our Bogali, we don't like to dance. But Gagvili, they die dancing.' It is notable that she does not like dancing, whereas her now Gagvili daughter jumps at the chance. Additionally, the region's Meskhetian Turkish musicians are a group of Gagvili brothers. Another Bogali said that they were known for being strong minded the cleverest. 'People take brides from us, but don't give them to us!' Referring to another *kūv*, into which a cousin had recently married, she described them as stingy, saying that they are 'people who would hug a cold stove.'

¹⁴⁶ The Turkish is *köy*, village.

¹⁴⁷ These villages were inhabited also by Georgians – *Gürcüler*, Kurds – *Kürtler*, and others, but this social use of *kūv* refers only to the Meskhetian Turks and their descendants.

¹⁴⁸ 'The suffix *-li* is used to indicate that something has a certain quality or contains something. It is added to nouns to form adjectives' (Rona 1998:53).

¹⁴⁹ In contrast, when Armenians (who have similar village affiliation) ask *Oor deghatsi ek?*, 'Where are you from?' or 'Where are you native?', they may expect to hear about the other's former village association (like *kūv*), although they may equally be told whether the speaker presently lives in Cyprus or England (Pattie 1997:149).

Many *kūv* names also have nicknames, referring to characteristics of *kūv* ancestors rather than their descendants.¹⁵⁰ One couple were both Tvetili before they were married, but were from different parts of the *kūv*, both of which have nicknames. One is *koçali* Tvetili, 'respected,' while the other is *dahyan* Tvetili, meaning 'one who moved in with his wife.' Apparently a Tvetili ancestor divorced his wife, married again, and moved into the new wife's street. This is shameful behaviour because, as mentioned above, 'the woman always goes to the man's side,' and the embarrassing nickname stuck. There are also several *kūvler* with 'upper' and 'lower' variants, which leads to jokes or insults between the two groups. For example, 'You drink the water I wash my feet in' (said by an upper to a lower villager). And (a husband joking to his wife), 'Don't you remember that your mother bought whey from mine?!' He is referring to the fact that, being from a village higher in the mountains, his wife's parents kept few cows and therefore had to buy milk products. The humour draws on the fact that, while Meskhetian Turks make a variety of dairy products, whey is the only one that they give away free to their neighbours, since it is next to useless to them, being used only to start the souring of the next batch of cheese or curds.¹⁵¹

Meskhetian Turks have adapted the concept of 'village relations' to new circumstances, to conceive of groups of otherwise unrelated Meskhetian Turkish residents of Russian villages and Uzbek towns. A middle-aged man asserted that, in Uzbekistan, of those who lived in Fergana, only two or three per cent were bad people; 'everyone was friendly.' But fifty percent of those from Tashkent were bad, and, 'When you talk to them they are normal, but behind your back they will mutter about you.' Similarly in Russia, two sisters complained of the embarrassing noise made by Meskhetian Turkish women from nearby Proletarskaia talking loudly in the bus station. 'You don't hear Bratskii or Poltavskii Turks [from two nearby villages] talking that loudly, do you?' And at the bride's side of a wedding the master of ceremonies called out, 'Let the girls from Sovetskaia [the husband's Russian village] dance, so that we can choose a good bride, because you are taking one of ours!' Here the stereotypes are not the reattribution of existing *kūv* stereotypes¹⁵² but the establishment of new categories of people.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Compare these with Roma group names which may be similarly teasing or derogatory (Stewart, M n.d.:3)

¹⁵¹ Some *kūvler* also have distinctive vocabulary items. The raised platform, an integral aspect of almost all homes, is called a *sekū* by most Meskhetian Turks, but to the Bogali it is a *sōki*.

¹⁵² The descendants of Greek refugees from Turkey attribute shared characteristics to people from the same region of Turkey, but the old stereotypes have also been attached to new groupings resident in Greece. This occurred despite the fact that people were settled without regard to place of origin, so that concentrations of households from the same town in Turkey have come about by chance, if at all. Thus Yerania in Greece is characterised as a gregarious district, much as Smyrna was in Turkey, although only a third of Yerania's refugee population came from Smyrna (Hirschon 1989:23-25).

However, co-residents of Russian or Uzbek villages do not positively associate with one another. *kūv* remains a unique grouping drawn from residence in Georgian villages.

It is important to note that the Meskhetian Turkish practice of identifying one another by *kūv*¹⁵⁴ contrasts greatly with the manner in which they are identified in Russian, and formerly Soviet, passports and all official identification documents.¹⁵⁵ In these, two names are used in addition to the personal name. The patronymic (*otchestvo (R)*) is formed in accordance with the standard Russian practice: *-ovich, -evich* (for men) or *-ovna, -evna* (for women) is added to the father's first name for men. Surnames or family names (*familia (R)*) are similarly formed by adding *-ov, -ev* (for men) and *-ova, -eva* (for women) onto a male name, often that of the grandfather or great-grandfather of the present generation.¹⁵⁶ Murat Bayramovich Bayramov's children are thus Yassin Muratovich Bayramov and Guldasta Muratovna Bayramova. Among Meskhetian Turks themselves, however, the surname is never heard, and although a Meskhetian Turkish patronymic form exists (Murat's son and daughter are *Murat-oğlu* and *Muratın-kızı*) it is employed primarily in reference, rather than in address, as it is in respectful Russian. It is usually used only if the *kūv* name is insufficient to distinguish the person in question¹⁵⁷. As elsewhere in Europe, although patrilineal descent is sometimes said to be the most 'real' form of relatedness, it is in practice of lesser importance than ensuring the continuity of a community of related persons. In this case continuity is

¹⁵³ A similar phenomenon, *kaka*, has been noted among displaced and returnee Acholi and Madi in Sudan and Uganda. *Kaka* are described in terms of lineages and clans but serve similar functions to the 'village' or 'neighbourhood' elsewhere (cf. Bloch 1989:91). Following much movement and other social pressures, people from different clans living together have 'created' *kaka*, as a means for getting along and establishing trust in the face of accusations of poisoning. By no longer marrying among themselves, they have become *kaka*, conceiving of themselves as thus related in relation to other local groups (Allen 1988/89).

¹⁵⁴ Note that this is not recorded in any official register, and appears to be unknown by most who write about Meskhetian Turks (for example, Ray 2000, but cf. Aydingün 2000:175).

¹⁵⁵ See chapter six for discussion the importance of documents in Russia and the Soviet Union.

¹⁵⁶ I suspect that this is a result of the introduction of official surnames during the early Soviet period when identification documents were issued. One man told me that it is possible to change a surname to one derived from the father's name when registering a child's birth. In practice, given the rigidity of Russian administrative systems, and the problems a family faces (in, say obtaining a passport or medical card) when a child's surname is recorded with even one letter different from that of his father, I think it unlikely that many would choose to change a surname. I suggest that the belief that this is possible stems from their having to 'invent' surnames in the past two generations. However, since I have no documentary evidence that this occurred, this is speculation. I know of no-one, other than the very elderly, whose surname is derived from their father's name.

¹⁵⁷ If, for example, there are two Yūsūf Bogalis. But assuming, for the purposes of calculation, that the present population is divided equally between the *kūv* derived from the 220 villages from which Meskhetian Turks were deported, each would consist of just over 1360 people. It is very unlikely that they are all resident in the same area or even the same country.

represented by the *kūv*, which is emphasised in both reference and address, despite official requirements to register a patrilineally inherited surname.¹⁵⁸

For the Meskhetian Turks the village name, *kūv*, thus provides a category of people with whom one identifies, which is discussed and interacted with in terms of relatedness. One woman explained, 'The Bogali are our *rodnoi* (*R*).'¹⁵⁹ *Rodnoi*, a Russian adjective meaning 'own, native, familiar, dear,' is used by Meskhetian Turks in other contexts to refer specifically to those who are born of the same parents.¹⁵⁹ While many inhabitants of the same *kūv* are known to be related consanguineally or affinally, others are not, or at least any previous such relationships have been forgotten. But *kūv* membership still allows for interaction between Meskhetian Turks as relatives. For example, Ayşa was betrothed to marry a Chorcholi man from the same village. When neighbours gathered one day prior to her marriage at her father's house to examine clothes brought by an itinerant trader, Ayşa brought drinks out to the women. She was thanked by a neighbour who called her *gelin-canım*, 'my dear bride.' Ayşa's mother laughed, and the neighbour replied 'I'm also Chorcholi!' Although the relationship between the neighbour and Ayşa's husband-to-be could not be described in genealogical terms, she saw herself as one of those about to obtain a bride.

Yet *kūv* members are not described collectively as *cigerler* (relatives). They do not hold anything in common, and, as members of the same *kūv*, they have no authority over one another. Although almost all my informants knew their father's (hence their own), if not also their mother's, *kūv*, the *kūv* is of little organisational significance.¹⁶⁰ The *kūv* has no political function; Meskhetian Turkish 'leaders' do not represent their *kūvler*. The only occasion on which a significant number of *kūv* members might gather is a wedding.¹⁶¹ At one wedding, a rug behind the musicians displayed the words *Gagvili Anseml* - the Gagvili band. Although it is usual to display the name of the couple, the band are not usually thus celebrated. That this occurred on this occasion was due to the fact that both the hosts and the musicians were Gagvili, and that they were also friendly neighbours. The wedding was no different from any other, and the Gagvili

¹⁵⁸ Pine notes that Polish Gorale know one another by their house-name, which 'indicates kinship and confers social identity' (1996:446), rather than by the officially registered surnames which passed are from husband to wife and children. Similarly, Austrian peasants stress the continuity of the 'house, in whose name people are addressed. Patrilineal family names are locally known as 'written names,' and are known by only a few people (Seiser 1999:116).

¹⁵⁹ An example of such usage which amused the local community occurred at Aygün's wedding. Her father's brother's seven-year old son declared he would have danced at the wedding had Aygün been his *rodnaia baci* – his birth sister. What the boy does not yet know, but everyone else does, is that he was born to Aygün's mother, but given to his present parents as they were unable to have children.

¹⁶⁰ I cannot tell what if any such significance the *kūv* may have had in the past.

¹⁶¹ Even then, the fact that there are many members of the same *kūv* present is often more an accident of close co-residence than a matter of design.

musicians play throughout Belorechensk for Meskhetian Turkish weddings,¹⁶² irrespective of the hosts' *kūv*. Thus the Meskhetian Turkish *kūv* has little political economic or religious organisational significance. In this sense it is similar to other concepts of affiliation, discussed by their members in terms of kinship, such as Rom brotherhood or even Chinese lineage (Stewart 1997, 1999, Watson 1985).¹⁶³

Despite the non-corporate nature of the *kūv*, its existence allows for a sense of affinity with one another, and a license in interactions with its members which distinguishes them from 'no-ones.' For example, shortly before her own wedding, an Amkherali girl attended the wedding of another Amkherali. Her aunt criticised her for dancing too much, as her future parents and brothers-in-law were present. The girl's relatives were worried that her dancing would be disrespectful to these people, particularly since a bride does not dance freely for several years after her marriage. But the wedding's host told her, 'It is a Amkherali wedding, dance as much as you like.'¹⁶⁴

Interestingly, village relationships have been used or developed by other former Ottoman migrants and refugees as resources for comfort and survival. Greek villagers who migrate to Athens, London or Sydney often form clubs based on village membership. 'People who hardly had time to do more than greet each other in the village now become fast friends and seek each other out' (Loizos 1981:203; see also Hirschon 1989). Similarly rural Turkish migrants to Istanbul often stay with kin and *hemşire*, regional compatriots, before building or renting their own apartments (White 1994:25). The importance of village relations rests upon their apparent moral obligation to assist one another, an obligation which often draws upon a discourse of kinship between all those from the same village. It is notable that village relationships in Turkey and elsewhere are relied upon in the risky game of choosing marriage partners, as they are thought to provide a framework of trust and certainty (White 1994:59). In the

¹⁶² They also occasionally play for the weddings of smaller nationalities, including Christian Greeks (Anton Popov, personal communication).

¹⁶³ As Watson states, 'Although the Chinese lineage may seem to dominate political organisation, religion, and perhaps even production and consumption, in fact it does not do so (Watson 1985:173). It could be argued that the lineage does not dominate kinship relations either, if one were to analyse Watson's data in the way advocated by Carsten (2000) and Schweitzer (2000). Despite noting that 'among most Teng, one finds a decided avoidance of affines' (Watson 1985:119) she briefly mentions the role of women in maintaining relationships with affines, and the roles of affinal women in preparing for the major life cycle rituals. Women (half of her informants) are expressly excluded from the lineage, and one assumes that these 'practical kin' (Bourdieu 1990:168) may have something else to say about how people are related.

¹⁶⁴ Very similar interactions occur in northern India, where village co-residents consider themselves to be 'village relations, and use the same terms of reference and address, forms of interaction, and absence of veiling as they do between consanguineal kin. These relationships are maintained when village women marry, so that a man going to visit his sister takes a gift not only for her but also for other women who have married from his village and reside in her new village (Lambert 2000, cf. Stafford 2000).

following chapter I discuss a similar approach, to choosing brides, taken by Meskhetian Turks, and the problems associated with relying on relatedness as a guide to good character.

The continued role of 'village relations' need not be dependent on an identification with the physicality of the village in question. Hirschon asserts that the *territorial* concept of home remains vital for the Greek refugees, and that in attaching old regional stereotypes to new residential districts they make 'spaces' into 'places,' re-creating 'a familiar mental landscape out of an unknown, uncharted expanse' (1989:25). But as Pattie notes, 'the experience of place, whether present or known through memory, is always about people and their relationships as well as the physical surroundings' (Pattie 1999:82, cf. Loizos 1981:131), and the significance of the relationship with territory as opposed to relationships between people varies. Although the question used to identify one's *kūv*, *Siz nere'den?* refers literally to a place, I argue that it would be a mistake to assume that a concept of 'village relatives' retains its territorial attributes, rather than simply being 'a known group of people associated together in a neighbourhood' (Colson 1971a:50). Although for some peoples there can be no doubt that the bonds between co-residents are explicitly related to their inhabitation of the same land,¹⁶⁵ it should not be assumed that this is always the case. When a people who identify with one another as 'village relatives' move away from the place in which the ties were formed, often the relationships continue to be significant without recourse to their territorial referent. Even for those who do not move, territorial associations may be over-emphasised by anthropologists.¹⁶⁶ It is this assumption of territorial association which led Malkki to develop her critique of the 'national order of things,' as discussed in the introduction (Malkki 1992, 1995a, 1995b), which both produces refugees and situates them within a restrictive international bureaucratic apparatus (Malkki 1993).

Notably, most Meskhetian Turks know nothing of the place to which the name refers, and show little interest in finding out. Although one man talked with his great-aunt about the position of the river in Boga village, and the names of neighbouring *kūvler*, which he has never seen but were described to him by his grandfather, others were far less interested and looked at maps of Meskhetia only because I happened to obtain

¹⁶⁵ For example, for Portuguese peasants of the Alto Minho, the importance of the hamlet as group is apparently indistinguishable from the hamlet as physical space. 'There is no local conception of a social group independent of its geographical setting, so that when a *minhoto* speaks of a hamlet, parish or borough, he has both the people and the land in mind' (Pina-Cabral 1986.3,127).

¹⁶⁶ Indicating the presence of this phenomenon in one of anthropology's formative texts, Evans-Pritchards' *The Nuer* (1940), Dumont suggests that it is unnecessary to distinguish a territorial attribute and that the Nuer can be understood to have 'only one system instead of two: a system of unilineal descent groups without a territorial dimension' (Dumont 1975, cf. Hutchinson 1996).

them (appendix: map d is one such example). Knowledge of *küvler* consists almost solely of knowing the *küv* of one's relatives and acquaintances.

Aydingün has said of the Meskhetian Turks in Kazakhstan that, 'The symbol of the homeland was so strong that even those who did not see Ahıska [Meskhetia](the homeland) had detailed knowledge about the villages and specifically the villages where their parents came from' (Aydingün 2000:114). I argue that knowledge of one's parents' *küvler* is not symbolic of a strong conception of Meskhetia as 'the homeland.' Indeed elsewhere Aydingün notes that the Association in Bursa, Turkey, which provides Meskhetian Turks with semi-official identity cards,

'registers the illegal migrants... by asking them to provide information about their family and their original villages. Since people know each other by their villages or families, they easily understand whether the person is really a Turk or not. As the local identities of kin and village are still very strong, this method of registration works well' (Aydingün 2000:175).

As her own data demonstrates, the 'village' is a tool for connection with one another, rather than with the land on which the buildings, from which the *küv* draws its name, once stood.

I have discussed the *küv* at some length in order to demonstrate that in form and function it provides for a kind of relatedness. It is not a corporate political grouping, although it could be, and could have been. It is also not a territorial institution, despite its 'roots' in a physical place. Just as 'house' does not necessarily rely on a physical space,¹⁶⁷ nor do 'village relatives' rely on the village as place. Rather, the concept of house or village works as a metaphor, through which people relate to one another. Reference to a physical institution does not necessarily suggest continuous identification with that or any physical institution, a point to which I shall return in chapter six.

In demonstrating that the *küv* is a category of kin, I have also shown that, in practical terms, it is little more than this. The *küv* as a group is very rarely activated, and when it is, at weddings, it is an incidental occurrence, a result of the gathering of kin defined by other means, and of contemporary neighbours. Yet the fact that it remains important *because* it is a group of people who are seen to be related further illustrates the importance of being related for its own sake. As Edwards and Strathern state in their

¹⁶⁷ As, for example, in the Yemeni *sayyid* 'houses' described by vom Bruck (1998:269).

discussion of English kinship, 'Connections appear intrinsically desirable... people take pleasure in claiming personal links' (Edwards & Strathern 2000:152). But one must 'work' at being kin (Bodenhorn 2000:143), in order for such links to be maintained, so that the kin they connect are not forgotten. The most significant way of working at being related among Meskhetian Turks is to go visiting.

Maintaining Relatedness: Visiting

Other than chance meetings at the market, or when at weddings, kin who do not reside in the same village only meet when one household visits the other. Visiting relatives also provides the only form of leisure activity undertaken outside the home village. While men occasionally drop in on friends to whom they are not, or are only very distantly, related, women never do, and thus 'to go as a guest,' *misefire gitmeh*, almost invariably means to visit *relatives*. Visiting is the prime means through which people consolidate their relationships.

Most visits have a more-or-less explicit purpose. Brief or day-long visits might be undertaken to inspect a new child or bride; request a loan; announce a Qur'an reading; invite the household to a wedding, or report on a car for sale. A bride returning with her husband to her natal home for the second or third time after marriage might stay overnight, as do visitors during the Ramazan fast and the ensuing *Bayram* (holiday). People stay for a few days or a week if they have come for a wedding. Longer visits, sometimes of months, occur when a bride, who has been given in marriage far from her natal home, returns to visit with her husband and child; or on the anniversary of a death; or when girls are sent to help in relatives' *ogorody* (allotments). These later visits often result in marriage proposals, when the visiting girls are spotted at local weddings. But while a man may visit his kin at any time, the visit is unlikely to be purely social. Few adults have the time or money to afford the luxury of visiting for its own sake, and those who do so are disapproved of. When a young man with a reputation for avoiding work was preparing to visit his aunt's family in a neighbouring district, it was said with some disapproval 'he likes to go visiting.'¹⁶⁸

It is said that a person is a guest for three days, and thereafter becomes one of 'ours' (*bizim*). As discussed in the last chapter, being a member of a household implies participation in the household's productive activities, and although the end of the three

¹⁶⁸ The inferred criticism was that he was not using his spare time to work to earn some money, or labour in the *ogorod* at home.

days somewhat reduces the obligation on the hosts to provide special food, it is the expectation of participation in household labour which is more significant. Given my informants' association of hospitality with their faith (see below), it is notable that this three day period of guesthood is common to some other Muslim peoples.¹⁶⁹

In practice, the Meskhetian Turks do not stick rigidly to the three-day rule. Close relatives, particularly girls and young women, involve themselves in their host's household labour almost immediately upon arrival, helping to set the table, prepare food, and wash up. And respected visitors to a wedding may stay a week without any particular contribution of labour. One woman complained that she was out of pocket because her son's wife's grandmother (who is also her mother's sister) had been staying for two months, and she needed to keep good food on the table. Her niece retorted that 'someone is a guest for three days only.' Her aunt laughed, 'People just say that,' and to me continued, 'Maybe if you live here for twelve years you will not be a guest.'¹⁷⁰

While women may occasionally grumble at the cost and work involved in frequent hospitality, such comments are uncommon, and certainly no indication is made to the guests themselves that they are a burden. On the contrary, whenever one makes to leave, one is pressed to stay longer; and guests are welcomed at whatever time they arrive.¹⁷¹ Guests are an asset to a household. In part this is because a much visited household is admired in the community; in part the frequent injections of news and conversations into daily life are simply pleasurable. But hospitality involves God as well as the guests. It is said that, 'If a guest comes through the door, God will send all that is needed through the window' (*Misefir geliyir kapi'dan, ruskhi geliyir ayna'dan*). Thus when one hosts guests, God provides one with *ruskhi*, that is, 'as much as God created for you. What He has allocated you to eat, whether it be for all life or for a few days. He has said that this is enough for you.' Further, 'when a guest eats well at the table, it brings blessings to the hosts.' God therefore encourages and provides for hospitality.

¹⁶⁹ Delaney notes that in rural Turkey 'a person is considered a guest for only three days, after which he or she is a member of the household and is expected to do his or her share of the work' (Delaney 1999:164 footnote). Similarly, when Lavie took her husband to visit her Sina Bedouin informants, 'after our three guest days, all pleasantries ended and I could start my fieldwork routine' (Lavie 1990:33). I am not aware of the existence of this 'three-day rule' among non-Muslims, but my evidence is inconclusive.

¹⁷⁰ Although it took me longer to understand what labour was required of me as one of 'ours' than it would most guests, my permanent 'guest' status in this woman's mind had more to do with my not being a Meskhetian Turk. I had no intention of marrying into the community, and, as discussed above, I had been told that this was the only way I could become a Meskhetian Turk, as it would imply accepting their faith.

¹⁷¹ I have seen the table brought out when guests arrived after most household members had gone to sleep (10.30pm), and before most awoke (6.30am).

It is notable that the provision and consumption of food is central to the relationship between hosts, guests and God. Providing food for guests is the focal point of their visit; to fail to offer food and drink to a visitor is unacceptable. Some visits last for little longer than the time it takes to consume a couple of bowls of tea, but it is very unusual for a visitor not to at least drink tea,¹⁷² and refusal to eat causes offence.¹⁷³ When there is food on the table, guests are repeatedly encouraged to consume. However, 'guests feel embarrassed and need to be encouraged to eat,'¹⁷⁴ which leads to repeated exhortations 'take' more, and 'don't be embarrassed.' As one old woman laughed, *Muselmanskii zakon: al, al!*, 'It is a Muslim law: take, take!'

After greeting all their hosts, guests pass into the main room, and depending on the formality of the visit and the number of guests present, the women may move into a second room, leaving the men to smoke and watch television. As soon as the initial pleasantries have been exchanged, the household's younger women put water on to boil for tea, and bring out the low table, or place a plastic sheet on the floor if the group is large. When the visit is prearranged (a post-wedding visit to a daughter, or the Qur'an reading for a new house for example) the food provided is a full and special meal. But most visits are unannounced, and hence before a meal can be prepared, a snack is always provided. Meskhetian Turks usually have a limited number of prepared foodstuffs present in their houses, but all that is available is brought out for guests. Bread and tea form the backbone of both snacks and meals, but are accompanied by a range of salty and sweet items: *peynir* (cheese), *kaymah* (cream), *varen'e (R)* (thick jam), *salat* (pickled salad), *konfet (R)* (sweets) and *pechen'e (R)* (biscuits) as well as any fruit available: particularly *karpuz* (watermelon) in August and September, or thinly sliced oranges during the winter. All available items are placed on the table at once, on an even number of dishes. If men and women are eating separately, a greater proportion of the special food is placed on the men's table, regardless of the total number of people eating.

¹⁷² On the couple of occasions during my fieldwork when this did occur, the visitors were distant relatives or unrelated; always men; and always seeking, but not finding, the male household head at home.

¹⁷³ This is of course not the case during the Ramazan fast, although most people know whether or not their guests are fasting before putting out the table during this period.

¹⁷⁴ This is thought to be particularly so for non-Meskhetian Turkish guests. People described the Uzbek custom of being offered food three times before it being acceptable to eat, with the attendant anecdote about an Uzbek visiting a Meskhetian Turkish household, and after refusing to eat after a couple of exhortations, went home hungry as he was not asked again! Russians too are thought to be particularly embarrassed, which is to some extent confirmed by observation, but probably also relates to their unfamiliarity with Meskhetian Turkish cuisine. Russians clear the table between savoury and sweet courses, unlike Meskhetian Turks, who leave all dishes on the table until everything is cleared away after tea. British people are classed with other non-Meskhetian Turks. However, after a few months, when visiting other households and being told, yet again, 'Take, take, don't be embarrassed,' my hosts said of me approvingly, 'She's not embarrassed!' See chapter five for further discussion of embarrassment.



14. Visiting.

Tea is drunk hot, dark and sweet without milk.¹⁷⁵ Tea is made in a tall metal teapot from water boiled in another,¹⁷⁶ from leaves if the family is well off, but otherwise from cheaper grains. The golden colour of a good tea is commented upon. It is sometimes drunk from small glasses or cups, but often, and always with guests, from small bowls (*piala*). Tea is served by the hostess, or, at an all male table, by the host or a younger adult relative. One passes the bowl or cup silently to the holder of the teapot for a refill, but the holder of the teapot should offer more before one's bowl is empty. Every meal concludes with tea, and only once all have finished drinking will the girls clear away the table.

The important place of co-consumption in the visit, itself the means by which kinship is most often maintained, points to the significance of co-consumption in the experience of being related. Notably the role of sharing food in maintaining relatedness has been noted both among people who have an expansive perception of potential kin (cf. Bodenhorn 2000), and for whom kinship is based on shared consumed substance (Langkawi Malays, discussed in Carsten 1995, 1997); but also among others whose recognition of kin is genealogically restricted and does not draw on a concept of shared consumed substance (Sarakatsani, described in Campbell 1964). For the Meskhetian

¹⁷⁵ I was told that milk and tea must not be drunk together or one will feel sick. The evidence of my compatriots was not seen as sufficient proof to the contrary.

¹⁷⁶ This contrasts with the Russian custom of brewing strong tea in a small pot and adding hot water in the cup.

Turks, for whom kinship is expansive but not based on shared substance, the communal eating of food is also constitutive of the related community. This is reinforced on one of the two occasions on which guests *do not* eat the hosts' food: when a prospective groom's relatives travel to ask for a girl in marriage. Even if the hosts know, or suspect, the purpose of this visit, they bring out the table and put water on to boil. But until the girls' relatives have agreed to give her in marriage, the visitors will not eat. One man explained, 'If they set the table I should not eat anything. If I say I don't need the table they know that I have not simply come.' Since elder relatives must be consulted before a daughter is given in marriage, unless her parents immediately refuse a date is set for a second visit. If in agreement, on this occasion the girl's relatives prepare a special meal, a sign to the future husband's relatives that their suit has been successful.

Thus *not* eating together indicates a very unusual situation, and one in which the guests are not (yet) relatives of their hosts.¹⁷⁷ This 'formal denial of commensality' (Campbell 1964:133) highlights the visit as life-changing significance, so much so that the very foundation of hospitality and relatedness, co-consumption, is temporarily suspended. Once this difficult period has been concluded the two parties will lay for one another more-than-usually generous tables in the visits that precede and follow their now joint venture, the wedding. It is further notable that the first time a newly married couple are ever alone with one another, they eat together. This occurs at two or three o'clock in the morning, after they have sat, on display and not eating, at the head table in the wedding marquee. The meal they eat is always the same: a smoked, fried or roasted chicken, two tennis-sized balls of *halva*,¹⁷⁸ and *kalamem*, a special square kind of bread. Thus while physical consummation of the marriage does not occur until the following night, the bride and groom now constitute their union through shared consumption.

The other occasion when food hosts do not provide food for guests' consumption is during the three days following a death, when the oven may not be lit for the preparation of food. During this period, it is the responsibility of neighbours and relatives to provide food for the grieving household. As with the proscription on eating at the moment of making new relatives, so hosts' non-hospitable behaviour at death

¹⁷⁷ In practice, since marriages are often arranged through, if not between, kin, those present may be already related. But the fact remains that this is a very specific type of visit, which, if successful, will result in far more contact, as kin, than has occurred between these households in the past.

¹⁷⁸ *Halva* is made from butter, flour and *şerbet* (sugared water). It is more commonly associated with funerals, for which it is also prepared, and funeral guests take *halva* home with them. However, it is also prepared and eaten on other occasions when the Qur'an is read, such as when a couple and their child move into a new house.

indicates the significance of the event in which kin, and relatedness, are lost rather than created.

Obligation

Relatives thus maintain their relationship through visiting, and the co-consumption of food plays a key role in the maintenance of kinship through hospitality. For those who are geographically distant, such connections are more difficult to maintain. As a result genealogical cousins may not recognise one another when they *do* meet. At her sister's wedding, one girl reported that she saw a crowd of women with bags gathered round her father's sister, and wondered, 'What is *bibi* doing with those gypsies?' Only after her aunt pointed her out did she realise that these were her cousins and father's brothers' wives. At another wedding, a girl complained to her father, 'We have no photos. That's why I didn't know my cousin at the wedding and walked past her. I walked past.' Although young cousins sometimes write to one another and send photographs, often this correspondence only begins after such a meeting at a wedding. Once girls marry, encounters with their consanguineal kin become rarer, as they are dispersed from their natal home, which is the focus of visits from geographically distant relatives.

But it is not always geographical distance that prevents the meeting of kin and maintenance of relatedness. One man told amusedly of his young daughter's failure to recognise his father's sister and her son, Lochin.

'Lochin told me to prepare aş (special rice dish) on Sunday. By nine o'clock he had not come, and I was sitting at a neighbour's. Lochin arrived, with Yusma-*bibi* [Lochin's mother], and two sisters. My daughter came to fetch me and said, 'Papa, some grandmother has come, and is asking for you'! They didn't know them. I used to travel there, but I couldn't take the whole family with me. When we moved here, Ahmed [Lochin's brother] was little. When he came back from the army, they came to visit, and Ahmed did not know me. He greeted me, and then went out. He did not know who I was to him!'

But later he confided that he no longer travelled the forty minute drive, or three bus rides, to visit Lochin because the latter does not show him or his other relatives respect.

'Yusma-*bibi* is the boss there, then Lochin. Even so, if Lochin says something and Yusma-*bibi* doesn't agree, it goes Lochin's way. They treat Lochin's father like a... like a lodger. And they treat Lochin like a king. He finished Institute, so they think he is important. I once said to him, 'You finished Institute, when will you become a human being? When you learn to respect your elders.' His father said, 'You said right.' I don't know, maybe I'm not used to it, maybe... I am not drawn to there. I don't like that kind of place, where someone puts himself up high. When I go and visit there should be some respect... I have never seen Lochin's wife. And I don't know how many children Lochin and his two brothers have. I am very rarely there, you see, and they don't come here.'

Lochin does not act as he should as a relative, neither within his own household nor beyond it, with his cousin.¹⁷⁹ Thus connections with those who are genealogically related may be lost if one party fails to fulfil his obligations as a relative.¹⁸⁰ Those who fail to perform as kin are no longer seen to 'be' kin. While the practice of kinship does not usually include an obligation to assist one another financially or with labour, as demonstrated in chapter two, kin are expected to treat one another with the respect due to related persons, and to receive one another as guests.

Although the obligation on a woman to serve her household and guests is more explicit than usual during Meskhetian Turkish visits, any 'power' attributable to guest and host emanates from their existing relationship, rather than the practices that constitute a visit (cf. Kanafani 1993, March 1998, Pattie 1997:172). Rather, the nature of these practices is prescribed by the gender, age and nature of relationship between the persons visiting and visited. This relationship is the reason for the visit, and the visit cements

¹⁷⁹ Such dissatisfaction with another's character is rarely made public, either in discussions with others or in the respect accorded to such relatives when they do meet. It is notable that this man only talked thus after I had lived in his household for nearly a year. Notably, shortly after my arrival in Apsheron, Lochin had summoned me to stay with his family for a while. Feeling not yet settled, I was unwilling to go then, but received no support in this desire from my host and his wife. The latter declared, 'He's his cousin,' in a manner that implied there was no difference between staying with him or his cousin. I therefore had no choice but to go and stay with Lochin. Similarly, when Müratdin visited his younger cousin and expounded his theory of the Meskhetian Turks' descent from two Meskhetian brothers (see chapter one), he was served the best available food and allowed to talk uninterrupted. Only two days later did his cousin's wife explain that Müratdin had left his first wife for another woman, but later returned to the former when their sons became rich and successful. His personal behaviour was unacceptable, but as a relative he was treated with respect whenever he visited.

¹⁸⁰ Similarly in Afghanistan, the *qawm* is a 'socially united and contiguous group of people who speak of themselves as if they are linked by agnatic kinship, although such a group actually includes affines, some neighbours, and others,' but which is not used to refer to persons who, despite agnatic or affinal relationships, do not co-operate with other members of the *qawm* (Eickelman 1989:154).

the relationship. While hosts are obliged to provide food, and guests to consume,¹⁸¹ when guests stay for more than a couple of hours they are left to occupy themselves; the hosts are not obliged to provide company or entertainment if other household tasks demand their attention.

But in the specific circumstances of wedding invitations, peoples' obligations as hosting or visiting members of the community come to the fore. Meskhetian Turks regard the Turkish (and British) practice of telephoning or awaiting an invitation prior to ordinary visiting as abhorrent.¹⁸² One man experienced this first-hand in Turkey, where he lived and worked for six months with his father's sister's husband. Arriving at the home of other relatives one day he was sent away again, and told he should have telephoned before coming.¹⁸³ Meskhetian Turkish houses are very rarely left empty; there is usually at least one young woman at home to serve tea. But disgust at the suggestion of invitations extends beyond this practicality, to the openness of the Meskhetian Turkish household¹⁸⁴ and the value attached to receiving guests in one's home (see above), and further, to the expansive nature of Meskhetian Turkish kinship, in which all who act as relatives are treated as such.

However, one may only attend a wedding if one has been invited. The strength of this restriction was illustrated when Fatima's father became livid that his daughter had gone to the groom's side of her cousin Faria's wedding, when his household had not been invited. She was said to have gone as Faria's 'friend,' invited by the bride herself. Shouting, her father retorted, 'What is a friend? Who are Faria or Fatima here? The parents are not invited, so the children should definitely not go.' Similarly, when a neighbour's relative in a nearby village gave his daughter in marriage, Habila attended, despite her husband's insistence that if no-one invited them, she should not go to the wedding. As soon as he returned from work, her husband asked whether she had attended the wedding. Habila declared that 'they' had come in the morning, but since she did not name the inviter, her husband was rightly not convinced that anyone had come.

¹⁸¹ This obligation is not a coercive practice of integration in the sense that has been highlighted elsewhere (Allison 1997, Carsten 1997, Døving n.d.).

¹⁸² It would be impossible for this to occur in rural Russia. None of the homes in Oktiabr'skii have telephones, and although one was available in the *sovkhoz* office for local calls (to work or the hospital), it frequently does not work.

¹⁸³ For many this story exemplifies why they do not want to leave Russia, with its familiar Soviet working and visiting practices.

¹⁸⁴ Unlike Russians, who shout from the gate of houses to call one another's attention and keep dogs by the house to keep strangers away, Meskhetian Turks enter each others' homes without first announcing their presence, and usually keep their dogs tied up by the sheds. See Stewart (1999:41) for a similar example of marginal people - in this case Hungarian Rom - who insist on the openness of their houses in comparison of the closed nature of those of the majority population.

Weddings usually have two celebrations: one held by the bride's household, on the day or night before she is collected; and the second, larger party (of up to four hundred guests) hosted by the groom's relatives. Although a household may attend both sides, they must be invited by both parties; an invitation from the bride's parents does not entitle one to attend the celebrations on the groom's side. Indeed the groom's relatives must invite the bride's relatives to 'their' wedding. Although relatives living beyond the district are invited by letter or telegram,¹⁸⁵ the majority of the guests receive a visit from a male relative of the host shortly before the celebration. He states, 'There will be a wedding in a week; come.'¹⁸⁶ A bride cannot invite her own relatives; it is 'shameful' for her to do so: 'She is young, how can she invite people? She will only invite her [female] friends. Her parents invite people.'

Also offensive is the failure to invite those who feel they ought to have been invited, whether this is due to their seniority; the fact that they have previously invited the present hosts to their own celebrations; or simply their presence in the locality. Yıldız complained that her husband's cousin's wife, Narmina, had married two other daughters, and neither time invited her to the *şerbet*, the betrothal celebration. 'They should invite me because I am the oldest bride. Narmina married half a year before me, and there are several women in Proletarskaia who are older than me, but I am the oldest bride of all Proletarskaia, because my husband is the oldest son of all Proletarskaia. They ought to invite me because I am the oldest bride, but they don't. If not me, then at least they should invite mine [my husband].' The insistence on inviting senior members of the community crosses ethnic boundaries; when Kamal's Armenian neighbour and friend Mahmed married off his daughter, he forgot to invite Kamal's mother's brother, a well known and respected figure in the village. Several people commented that this was unfortunate, and Mahmed himself was distressed when he later realised his mistake.

But once an invitation has been issued, a representative of the household is obliged to attend.¹⁸⁷ This obligation has a financial aspect, which will be discussed in the following

¹⁸⁵ Telegrams are only sent to announce weddings or deaths. Adults write to one another occasionally, but again usually only when there is significant news to report, such as an impending or past wedding, or the birth of a grandchild. News is more frequently passed by word of mouth. My forty-year old hostess, whose father and brothers live in Azerbaijan, learnt that she had a new brother this way. A message was passed to be told to 'Cafar in Apsheron'sk' that his wife's father's second wife had given birth. By a combination of *kuv* name and the fact that there are only two Cafars in Apsheron'sk, the message arrived via the market.

¹⁸⁶ Note that one is invited, and talks of going to, 'a wedding' rather than the wedding of particular individuals.

¹⁸⁷ Rural Greek shepherds' practice is very similar to that of my informants: 'An invitation [to a wedding] morally obliges a family to send a representative. It is not a question of whether a man

chapter, but it also implies a recognition of the balanced status of both households, and of the mutual indebted nature of members of the Meskhetian Turkish community. Sabid's parents invited Sevil's household to the wedding of their son in November 1999, but the latter did not attend. The following summer, when Sevil was given in marriage, Sabid's family were invited. They made it clear to several people that they had no intention of going, since Sevil's parents had not fulfilled their obligations: 'They didn't come to ours, so we didn't go to theirs.'¹⁸⁸

I suggest that wedding invitations magnify Meskhetian Turkish relatedness as practised and maintained through visiting. In daily life, obligations between visiting kin are not explicitly expressed, as demonstrated by the abhorrence for the idea of visits prefaced by invitations. Yet it is through visiting, and the hospitality shown to guests, that relatives enact their moral relationship with one another. Weddings are different from other visits in that these obligations are made more explicit.

Blurred Relations

Obligations concerning wedding invitations also epitomise the understanding that one has status only as a related person, and that that relatedness must be maintained through visiting. A person who does not maintain his relations with kin, either through absence or through acting without due respect for the others' position, risks drifting into the status of 'no-one,' only potential kin, as the relationship is forgotten. I have shown that 'kin' is a moral category used for situating and evaluating persons, and for ascribing roles, but that its boundaries (within the community of Meskhetian Turks) are relatively fluid. It is stated both that all kin are equal and that people related through women are less important, but in reality being related is practised in different ways in varying contexts. It is more important to act as a relative in order to be perceived as kin than it is to fit a specific kinship category. Connections between some of those who are thus related may be perceived to be based on genealogical connections in former places of residence, but in practice their significance is not attributable to ideals of descent or territorial identification.

can afford the time and expense to go and enjoy himself for three or four days, but rather that it is his duty to attend and support the family of the bride or groom simply because the members of that family are kinsmen' (Campbell 1964:115-116). This indicates that this cannot be explained simply as a Muslim notion of obligation, as the Sarakatsani are Christians.

¹⁸⁸ Gulnara's parents did not send a gift of money to Sabid's wedding, which would have been an acceptable replacement for their presence. See chapter four for a discussion of the role of money and debts in marriage.

Although kin cannot always be relied upon for economic support (see chapter two), it is largely through daily and visiting relationships with kin that the trying circumstances of life in Krasnodar are mediated. But as the extensive lists of places in which kin reside, and the distances travelled to help with the weddings of 'the closest of relatives,' demonstrate, the Meskhetian Turkish experience of relatedness is closely connected to their experience of displacement. Dispersed across much of the former Soviet Union kin often describe one another through the idiom of geographical distance, and experience this distance in undertaking the core Meskhetian Turkish social activity of visiting kin. These distances, and hence the disruptive nature of life in diaspora, are most usually overcome on the occasion of the marriage of one's relatives. Marriage is also the most significant way in which new kin are created. It is unsurprising then that weddings, the creation of relatedness despite dispersal, are the highlight of the Meskhetian Turkish social calendar, as I discuss in the following chapter.

4. Constructing Kin

In the previous two chapters I have demonstrated that kin are held to be a vital resource, those with whom one socialises and relaxes, and the people felt to be most trustworthy. The distinction between kin and non-kin, although strict in theory, is in practice more fluid. In addition, the arrival or construction of new kin is the cause for the most significant celebrations in Meskhetian Turkish life, surpassing the Muslim holidays of Ramazan Bayram and Kurban Bayram.

Making Kin: Birth

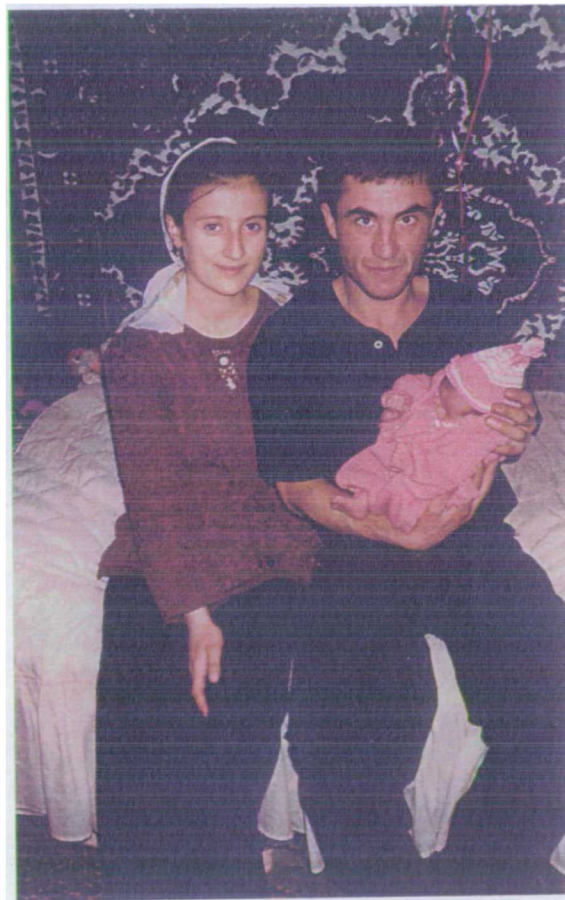
The most obvious sense in which new kin are produced is in the birth of children. Children are vital for continuity, but not for continuity of selves, nor as representatives of particular groups. Instead, in question is the practical need for children to care for their parents in old age; and, by their existence, to enable the young couple to become recognised in the community as fully adult and fully related. As noted in chapter three, status is dependent both on one's seniority but also on one's relatedness. Having children is an important symbol of adult status, gaining increasing significance as they age to adulthood themselves. The importance of children is illustrated by the lengths a childless man's household will go to in order to ensure they have progeny.¹⁸⁹ Another relative may give the couple a child, or the man may marry again, sometimes also retaining his first wife.¹⁹⁰ In addition, it is only with the birth of the first child that the series of exchanges that precede and follow a wedding may be concluded, when the bride's family pay off their debt by bringing her a cradle (see below). It is for these reasons that within a couple of months of a wedding, neighbours and relatives begin asking whether the bride is yet pregnant. Births, like weddings and deaths, provide a topic of conversations whenever relatives are visited or met.

But although children are eagerly awaited, and much discussed, their birth and early years are hedged with taboos and restrictions, and are not significantly celebrated. A woman's tasks do not decrease with pregnancy (as demonstrated in chapter two, by the young woman who helped to clean seven tons of onions six days before giving birth) unless she is hospitalised on doctor's orders. Stays in hospital occur fairly

¹⁸⁹ Childlessness is seen by a man's relatives as the woman's fault, although medical evidence that the husband 'does not have enough sperm' is also accepted.

¹⁹⁰ I do not know first-hand of cases in which this has occurred, but one childless bride, married for six years, mentioned that she and her husband had considered this as an option, and that a neighbouring man has two wives for this reason.

frequently; of the four young women I knew who were pregnant while I was in Krasnodar, three had a stay in hospital before going in to give birth. Kin may encourage them to return home in the belief that it is better for a woman to be active; one overweight young woman was discharged by her mother-in-law for this reason. Once contractions begin the woman is taken to hospital by relatives, and gives birth alone. Others learn of the birth if and when they visit, but may not go beyond the gates at the entrance to the maternity wards; young mothers are summoned to speak with them there. Once home, a new mother should not leave her house for forty days following the birth of her child. Although she may go outside if necessary, she must always hold something (a bit of hair in her mouth, or garlic in her pocket) and she must not do so after dark because 'it is dangerous.' A woman usually dismissive of similar fears reported that her uncle's son's wife had given birth, and gone outside at the hospital. She died within a few days, and the baby passed away soon afterwards.



15. Young parents proudly display their first child.

While a baby is still not forty days old, the child should not be visited in the morning or evening. Some say that the new mother's s'bl'ngs may visit her before forty days have passed, but her parents must stay away until then. Others assert that parents may visit. Either way, the new mother must not 'greet' guests (that is, she must not embrace

them) until 'her forty days' have passed. These prohibitions are not explicitly explained, although it is stated that they are because 'the child is still small.' One woman said that if a mother goes outside 'she can bring bad things into the house.' Greeting of the mother is not prohibited because 'she is still dirty,' but because 'something could happen to the child.' Whether it is primarily the mother's or the baby's safety that is at risk is unclear; it is probably both.¹⁹¹

In practice however, the restrictions are negotiated. If one forgets not to greet a new mother (*Görüşme!*, 'Don't greet her!'), there is more likely to be laughter on realisation of the mistake than concern over the woman's or baby's health. Just as a young bride insisted that it is forbidden to take gifts for a baby until the child is born, but then immediately discussed the clothing that she had already collected, so too visits may be made before the forty days, as is convenient for the guests. Indeed one woman whose daughter had recently given birth arranged for the young mother and her husband to visit after only twenty days in order to sort out some documents. This was described as 'coming out from the small forty,' *kuçuk kirkey çukendi*. The older woman added that in the past women finished forty days two or three days early: 'they stole a few days, washed and cleaned themselves.'

Among the Meskhetian Turks, after the forty days have passed, the child and mother may be visited by all relatives. In practice, although the baby is exhibited and admired, conversation soon moves on to the price and quality of flour and other topics of interest. The young mother is no more included in such conversations than before the birth; on the contrary, given that she now must care for the child as well as see to her other tasks, she has less time for sitting with guests. In any case, this is her mother-in-law's role. Although the maternal parents might visit before the forty days are over, the important visit only takes place afterwards, when they take the *beşek* (cradle), accompanied by other elders and greeted with an impressive meal. This event completes the cycle of indebtedness that cements the marriage as is discussed below.

Although close relatives will come and visit a household which has a new addition, the birth is not communally celebrated, and is rather the excuse for an ordinary visit. Indeed 'birthdays,' the anniversaries of a person's birth, are usually only marked by the cooking of *aş* (rice dish) and perhaps a cake, and these are sometimes eaten without

¹⁹¹ Concern over a woman's behaviour and health during the first forty days' of a child's life has been remarked upon elsewhere in Europe and the Middle East, explained variously as concern for the vulnerability of the mother or child, or the mother's dangerous impurity (Abu-Lughod 1993:131, Campbell 1964:154, Pina-Cabral 1986:113). Notably forty days is also an important period of mourning for people in many of these areas, as for the Meskhetian Turks (see chapter five).

the presence of the person whose birth they celebrate. Much more significant are the occasions when the child is involved in the construction of relationships beyond the household: at circumcision (for boys) and at marriage. I suggest that these are significant because they mark the conversion of two sets of 'no-ones' into relatives, and it is this wider construction of relatedness (rather than the status of the individuals concerned) that is celebrated.

Making Kin: Circumcision

The first of these celebratory constructions of kin occurs when a Meskhetian Turkish boy is circumcised aged five or six. The key character, other than the boy himself, is his *kirva*¹⁹² (godfather) who, by participating in this way, is transformed from 'no-one' into kin. The two households are thereafter connected as relatives. Although the *kirva* may be an existing relative (although often affinally rather than consanguineally linked with the boy's father) there is usually no known kin-relationship between the two men. Often he is a friend of the father, so the resulting relatives are already known and trusted. He must however be married, since his wife plays an important role in the boy's wedding, twenty to thirty years later.

Circumcision is described as making the boy 'clean.' As one woman said, 'Firstly, it's for cleanliness. Then, it's our custom.' Although it is not explicitly said that a boy becomes a proper Muslim when he is circumcised, the importance of circumcision for the Muslim community is alluded to. A few women debated whether an uncircumcised man could say *namaz*, the five-times-daily prayer. Another noted that 'Some Russians have started to do it, not to be Muslims, but for cleanliness,' indicating that for them it has more significance. The concept of cleanliness itself also demonstrates this. An old woman talking of weddings in Georgia said that they used to set up two sets of tables, one for their Georgian neighbours and one for them. She explained that this was because they were clean, because they washed their genitals, arms and face for prayer, which she illustrated by grabbing the relevant parts. In addition, when their children, boys, were little, they did *sūnnet* (circumcision), which she explained by clutching her crotch, and then 'slicing' at one finger with the other finger. So at weddings they had two sets of crockery, one for those who were 'clean,' and another for those who were not. The exposed parts of the body - hands mouth, nose, face, arms, head, ears, and feet - must be washed immediately prior to prayer, and all

¹⁹² *Kirvo* is also godfather among Hungarian Rom (Stewart 1997 61), which suggests a regional pattern of similar practices, or at least regionally shared terminology for persons made into kin in this manner.

Meskhetian Turkish toilets however rudimentary contain a jug of water for washing, extending the importance of washing beyond prayer. Thus, although not explicitly expressed as such, being clean in these areas has a religious significance, and thus being dirty here is sinful, as in the description of a girl presumed not to be a virgin as a 'pig-dirty girl' (*pinti kız*).

Talking of a ten year old boy about to be circumcised, a neighbour said, 'When he was in hospital the doctor even offered to do it, because dust was gathering there. But they refused.' Thus as well as the cleanliness having religious significance, the operation should not be carried out in a manner which ignores its wider importance. It must be done publicly and celebrated, since, like a marriage, it concerns not only those immediately involved but also the wider related community. A *sünnet* (circumcision) is celebrated with a *toy*, which is usually translated as 'wedding'.¹⁹³ The *sünnet toy* is sometimes described as a 'children's wedding,' and children are encouraged to dance more than they would usually.



16. Children dancing at a *sünnet toy*, held for the boy in the white shirt.

As at a marital wedding, on the evening prior to the celebrations old men and a mullah gather in the hosts' home to read the Qur'an (*koran okumah*). The next day a large open space is cleared, and, if rain threatens, covered with tarpaulin. Tables for men

¹⁹³ *Toy* is translated into Russian as *svad'ba*, which is 'wedding,' although the Russian word refers only to the marital celebration and not that for a circumcision, *obrezanie* (R). In this context it might be more accurate to translate *toy* as 'a celebration of activities that make relatedness between no-ones' since 'wedding' in English implies the union of two individuals. For ease of reading this has not been done, but the reader should be aware of this wider sense implied by my use of 'wedding' for *toy*.

and women are set up on either side, with a smaller one for the children and the musicians at either end. (At a marital wedding it is the couple rather than children who sit at the far end opposite the musicians). The space in the middle is kept clear for dancing. As for other weddings, the women of the household and their relatives spend several days preparing special food for the guests, who may number two hundred or more. Sometimes a *sünnet* *toy* is held on the same occasion as the wedding of one of the boy's relatives; other households choose to save expense by having two brothers circumcised at once.

After an evening of eating and dancing, the boy is brought to the front of the open space and the boy's *kirva* (godfather) brings him two suitcases of gifts, all of which are displayed to the guests. One contains two or three suits of clothing for the boy, plus clothing for his senior relatives. The other should be a 'suitcase of food, with meat, vodka, cigarettes, matches; everything that one can eat. Sweets, chocolate, should be layered in it, each by a little bit, but everything there is to eat. This suitcase is opened first.' This is announced as 'Everything sweet!' (*Hep tatlı!*), and emptied onto a tray for distribution among the guests. The boy is given one of the sweet items, and then led by his *kirva* to the house. The musicians play again and the dancing recommences.

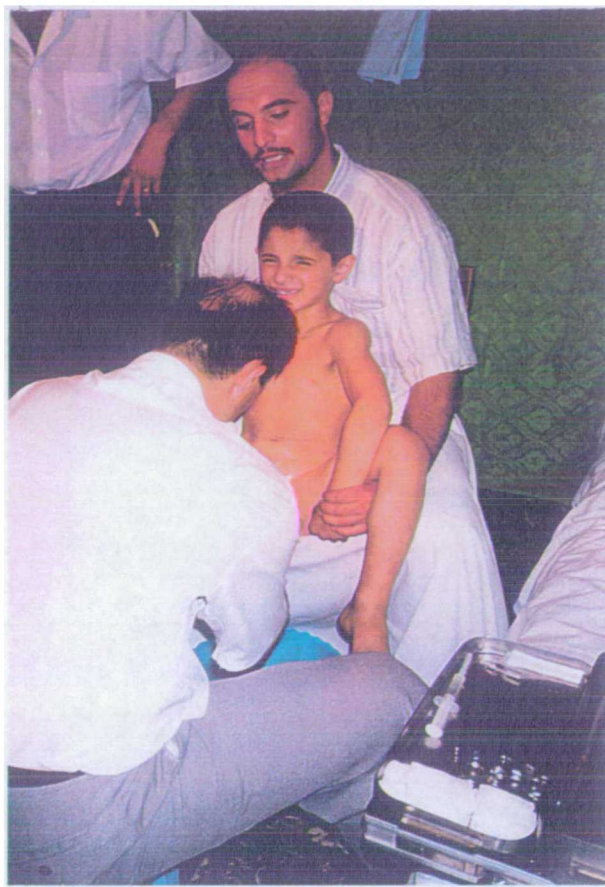
Inside the house the *kirva* sits on a chair in front of the doctor,¹⁹⁴ with a white sheet on his lap. After the boy has undressed he is sat on his *kirva*'s lap with his legs open and bent up, the latter holding his arms under his legs so that he cannot move. The operation takes approximately ten minutes, and is watched by a crowd of men. At the *sünnet* I attended,¹⁹⁵ some boys peeped in; one declared that, 'Only those who have had it done can watch.' A small girl came in but was shooed out. When the boy whimpered, his father and other men told him, 'It is nothing' (*Bu hiç bir şey*).¹⁹⁶ Eventually, the boy was lain on a bed with his legs open and his penis bandaged. His *kirva* was the first to give him money: 300r, a considerable sum. Other men followed, with 150r, 100, and 50r in 10r notes. Although obviously still in pain, the boy started counting his money, and smiled. The crowd of men dispersed, and a few women

¹⁹⁴ One woman said that the operation should be done by a *sünnetçi*, a Meskhetian Turk whose job, like being a wedding musician, is to do the operation. 'It should be done by our man, *sünnetçi*, not by a doctor.' I am not sure to what extent this occurs in practice; the *sünnet* I witnessed was carried out by a Meskhetian Turkish doctor.

¹⁹⁵ I was allowed to watch because I was taking photographs. One woman, who accompanied me to the door, said, 'It is not embarrassing for women to watch, because it is only a child. Women don't watch because they are afraid.' None of the men questioned my presence, although I received a couple of questioning looks. Whether or not it is embarrassing or shameful for a woman to watch, it was embarrassing to be in a room of only men, and I was very glad that I had covered my head for the evening. Embarrassment is discussed further in chapter five.

¹⁹⁶ Note that expressing pain is discouraged; see chapter five for further discussion.

peeked in. Outside the music and dancing continued throughout the operation and for another hour thereafter.



17. A boy with his *kirva* and *sünneci*.

The role of the *kirva* does not come to an end with the circumcision. On the contrary, the *sünneci* marks the beginning of a relationship. He and his wife 'are second mother and father to the boy. If his parents die, then they should look after him, feed and clothe him, and when he is older, marry him. They should do everything that parents do.' Even in normal circumstances, a *kirva* should visit his young charge, taking money, sweets or clothes as gifts. The kinship nature of the relationship is not simply a hypothetical one. Just as a boy may not marry his sister (his natal father's daughter) so he may not marry his *kirva*'s daughter, nor may any of the young generation marry, such as the boy's sister and the *kirva*'s son. Further, the *kirva*'s wife is the boy's *yenge*: when he marries it is she who goes with the boy's father to collect his bride. In practice, given the dispersal of relatives and friends across the former Soviet Union, it is not always possible for the *yenge* to fulfil her function perhaps twenty years after her husband began his. Now, 'if you are ill, or live far away, or can't come for some reason, someone else can be *yenge*. For example an aunt.'

There is no equivalent ceremony or celebration for young girls. One woman suggested that ear-piercing, often done before a girl reaches a year, is the female equivalent of circumcision. But the parallels end at the pain endured, since there is no public celebration, nor integration of non-kin as kin, in a girl's acquisition of earrings. However, there are considerable parallels, both in the practices of celebration and the consequences of an increased circle of kin for all involved, between circumcision and marriage. The two events are linked in the persons of the *kirva* and *yenge*, and in a sense the circumcision, while itself not signalling the transformation of a boy into a man, anticipates this transformation at marriage. In both cases, the importance of the event beyond the individuals or households involved is indicated by the fact that, apart from the boy/wedding couple, the key actors are never the parents but kin from beyond the household, and often women who have themselves been brought in to the group of relatives through marriage. The *sünnet toy* therefore consolidates the community of relatives as a whole, and constitutes it as a *Muslim* community. It does this in part through the idiom of kinship, in that it is new relations of kin that are primarily being constructed, between not only the boy and his godfather, but between two households and their wider relatives. The *sünnet toy* and the marital *toy* are linked, not only through the relationship between a boy and his *kirva*, but by the fact that these are the biggest Meskhetian Turkish social occasions. That they both celebrate the construction of relatedness demonstrates the importance of being related in Meskhetian Turkish life.

Making Kin: Marriage

A wedding (*toy*) is the key celebration in Meskhetian Turkish life, and in many respects represents the continuity and development of the maintenance of relatedness through visiting and the co-consumption of food. Marriage involves the conversion of unrelated groups of persons into kin. The *toy* itself is the highlight of a series of events and negotiations, which take place in the preceding weeks and following months, and which together enable the transformation from strangers to in-laws, *dungurlar*, and eventually to a closer kind of kin.

Marriages are arranged between households, or groups of kin, rather than between individuals. As discussed in chapter three, a person's interactions beyond the household are largely determined by their kinship relationship with others, and individual characteristics and desires are given limited expression. This is seen explicitly in the manner in which the bride is chosen, and in the agreement to give a girl in marriage. The bride, *gelin*, is always chosen by the groom, *eništa*, or his family.

When they, or he, decide that he should marry, sometime between the ages of twenty and thirty-five, his parents and relatives look for a girl, younger than him, to join their household. Girls marry from fifteen; by twenty-one they begin to be passed over in favour of someone younger. Sisters should marry in birth order, and if the younger marries first it elicits such comments as, 'The youngest is getting married first? What kind of new fashion is this?' In fact, if the elder is already too old, it is grudgingly acceptable for her sister to marry.

The groom's family aim to find someone who is from a 'good family.' In chapter three it was noted that although seniority and regular religious practice entitle a person to respect, they do not give a person authority over those who are not members of their household, children or younger siblings. Similarly, Meskhetian Turks do not perceive of a hierarchy of households or groups of relatives, and do not seek a spouse for their child on the basis of improving their position in relation to others in the community. At the same time, although they value the economic equality which they see as epitomised by the Soviet Union (see chapter six),¹⁹⁷ and relatives share by demand items that are not perceived as having a monetary value (chapter two), neither do the Meskhetian Turks usually espouse an ideal of equality among themselves. And households are not equal. Brothers, for example, live in houses of starkly contrasting size and number of rooms, but the proscription on sharing money with relatives beyond the household prevents even close kin from feeling a responsibility to improve the economic circumstances of their relatives. Thus financial inequality between households and relatives is accepted, and people are not ranked according to their wealth.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Although they do not explicitly say as much, it seems that greater financial equality, both between relatives, and in comparison to other rural residents, is desirable. As will be discussed in chapter six, in conversations about the Soviet Union it is frequently asserted that 'earlier' all could afford a comfortable lifestyle, and hence were all 'equal.' The positive light in which Communism is portrayed in these conversations suggests that economic equality is something which many would prefer to the present situation.

¹⁹⁸ However, differences in economic standing do not mean that gifts or debts may be repaid proportional to the household's economic standing. On the contrary, people should return gifts (almost exclusively given at marriage) equal to those received by their household during their own festivities. When a girl from Oktiabr'skii was given in marriage to a man from Krymsk *raion*, the girl's mother's sister gave a rug costing 1000r. Less than two months later this woman's own daughter married, and the Oktiabr'skii sister could not afford a gift of the same value. She bought a tea set from the market for 325r, but when it was brought home she decided it was not attractive nor good enough china. 'We can't give some thing that looks so cheap when they spent 1000r. When her eldest daughter married I gave 200r but my sister said that I gave 500r, so that they wouldn't think that her own (*rodnoi* (R)) sister gave so little.' The tea set was returned and a slightly more expensive set (although still not costing 1000r) was taken instead. It is in order to ensure that mistakes are not made, in returning gifts of similar value in the future, that those hosting a wedding write down the amounts of money given by their guests (see below).

In choosing a household from which to take a bride, or into which to marry a daughter, although wealth may be a factor, it is far from the foremost consideration; equal financial standing of the two households is not required. A 'good family,' therefore, is sometimes one that is well off, but primarily refers to their hospitable and hard-working nature, their moral standing, and the lack of scandal surrounding their relatives. It is always the household and its wider kindred that are under consideration, rather than particular characteristics of the girl in question. The same is true when a girl's relatives assess a marriage offer. When Muhtar's relatives asked for Gulşan in marriage, I asked Gulşan's mother whether they knew Muhtar well. She said, 'I knew them even before I was married. Muhtar's father is my mother's cousin.' Gulşan (and probably her mother) had never seen Muhtar, although he had noticed her when she was visiting relatives in his home town. 'Muhtar saw her lots of times, he fell in love. Gulşan didn't look like that; she has only seen him once, when he came to visit.' Other comments demonstrated that they knew nothing of his personal character, and only that it is a 'good family.'

The relative unimportance of personal characteristics was demonstrated when this wedding did take place, and neither side were clear as to the couple's personal names. Gulşan's mother said, of the groom and his brothers (sons of her mother's cousin), 'They all have similar names, all begin with M. They say the name once and I forget it!' The groom's brother showed the same lack of knowledge of their new bride's name on the day of the wedding, asking, when she was referred to, 'That's our bride, yes?' However, the girl, once seen, is assessed for her beauty. Whether or not the bride is *güzel*, pretty, is also important for the wedding itself, in that all guests discuss this factor, and an attractive bride is an asset to both families. Although the bride and groom's abilities may be reported to the other side (she cooks and sews, he doesn't drink or smoke), rarely does either group have the opportunity to assess the accuracy of these claims until after marriage (a groom who 'doesn't drink or smoke' turned out to do both). Sometimes a mother-in-law asks for the bride to serve tea during a pre-wedding visit. But not only is the girl extremely nervous, dressed in unaccustomed headwear, and wearing high-heeled shoes, but she actually does little of the serving. A loaded tray is handed to her by one relative, and unloaded at the table by another. The family are as eager as she is to ensure that the bride does not falter, and the event provides more amusement for the groom's family, and embarrassment for the bride, than an opportunity to assess the girl's skills as a hostess. Rather, like the tying of loaves of bread around her waist during the wedding festivities (see chapter two), it indicates her capacity for service, and her subservience to her mother-in-law.

Parents therefore seek a spouse who is in some way known to their family. Although there are other ways of ascertaining the standing of a household, through village co-residence or enquiring through kin, often a relative is identified as a good candidate. Of the seven weddings in which I participated, four were between persons related through marriage; one couple were unrelated but had lived across the *ogorad* (*R*) (allotment) from one another for ten years; in the other two cases I do not know how the connections were made. Arrangements to marry relatives are usually traced through one or two marriages. As Parry notes with regard to marriages in Kangra, 'One's old established affines are a known quantity who have demonstrated their respectability and their willingness to meet their obligations in the past' (Parry 1979:295). In practice, however, the affines in question are often too geographically distant for the household to have previously had much contact with them.

Although cousin marriage is not forbidden, there is some debate as to whether it is desirable. Some people would be happy to give their children to their siblings' children in marriage, in part because their own siblings are thought to be a known factor and thus guarantee a 'good' household. Others feel the relationship is too close; one girl exclaimed that her cousins should not marry because 'She's already his sister (*bacı*)!' But another man who disapproved of cousin-marriage was more concerned about possible tensions between the relatives were the marriage to end in divorce. Another woman was unimpressed with her Meskhetian Turkish neighbour's suggestion that she take her husband's brother's daughter as wife for her son. She declared, '*Hala çocuhlar* [mother's sister's children], *bibi çocuhlar* [father's sister's children], *tayi çocuhlar* [mother's brother's children], maybe, but they are *emi çocuhlar* [father's brother's children]! We don't marry *emi çocuhlar*!' Her neighbour, however, insisted that there would be nothing wrong with such a marriage. There is thus no consensus as to whether cousins should marry, or whether a distinction should be made between parallel and cross-cousin marriages.¹⁹⁹ In any case, I know of no recent instances of first cousin marriage.

Although the ideal is marriage to a (distant) relative, in practice, this does not vouch for the quality of the bride. Although most people can list the numbers, and usually names, of their innumerable cousins on both parents' sides, they may never have met them,

¹⁹⁹ The preference for patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage has been much discussed in literature on some Muslim communities in the Middle East (for example, Abu-Lughod 1986, Bourdieu 1990). The Meskhetian Turkish case is notable in that there is no coherent view on marrying cousins and that when a man's marriage to his father's brother's daughter is considered, it is more likely to be viewed negatively than positively, if it is distinguished from other marital options at all. It therefore refutes arguments that there is something innately Islamic about parallel-cousin marriage, or that it is a practice shared by Muslims on account of their faith (Todd 1985:134).

and hence know little about them (see chapter three). The reliance on kin-links therefore sometimes leads to conflict between the couple or other members of the household. Mariam's marriage to Polat, for example, is not a great success. His mother confided that, 'They are not a pair': they do not suit each other. Mother and daughter-in-law also do not get on well. But the marriage had been arranged due to the close kinship ties between the two households: Polat's grandmother and Mariam's great-grandmother were sisters, and Mariam's paternal grandmother had been brought up by Polat's mother's parents. Dissatisfaction with the match brought shifting blame on both sides as to who had agreed to it in the first place. But four years after the wedding, the couple have two children and their own house.

When a girl marries she must be a virgin.²⁰⁰ Her status is confirmed by her *yenge* (the woman who accompanies her at marriage) who, on the morning after the consummation of the marriage, 'straightens the bedding.' A small sheet is placed on top of the normal bedding, and it is this that the *yenge* removes. She does not show the sheet to anyone else, and, unless there is no blood, there is no discussion of the matter. But a bride who is found not to be a virgin is sent home. It is accepted that the 'the groom will know immediately whether she is a girl²⁰¹ or not,' and will say if she is not, because otherwise people will talk, that he married a woman who was not a virgin. Incredibly shameful for the girl, this is worse for her parents, for whom to have let their daughter 'walk' like this is a disgrace. It also seriously threatens her sisters' chances of marriage.

It is for this reason that household scandals cannot be discussed with relatives. Despite the assertion that, 'You're not my *rodnoi* (*R*) [born relative]... I do not tell you my secrets' (page 98, chapter three), in reality, were other relatives to know of a girl's impropriety, they will not assist in finding her or her sisters a spouse. Such news also threatens their own children's chances of marriage, because such taints are felt to apply to relatives beyond the household. As noted in the previous chapter, one young man's family had decided upon a girl as his bride, but, on learning that her mother's divorced sister has a lover, they did not return to continue negotiations. Such shame prevents disclosure even within the residential household. In one unfortunate case, a girl's father was reported to have been drunk and slept with his daughter. She was

²⁰⁰ Unless she is marrying a second time, usually to a man divorced or whose wife has died. Such marriages are unusual. Virginity is not required of men.

²⁰¹ *Kız* in Meskhetian Turkish and *devushka* in Russia primarily mean 'girl,' as in young female, and usually refers to one who is unmarried, although as noted in chapter three, *kız* continues to be used by one's senior siblings, husband and parents after marriage, and in this case it is the daughter or lower status female that is emphasised. In discussions relating to marriage and consummation, the same words mean 'virgin.' I have used the translation 'girl' in both cases to retain the non-specific language of the original.

given in marriage, but, when her status was discovered, she was sent home in disgrace. This 'excellent girl' had no avenue for avoiding the marriage.²⁰² Similarly, following the marriage of her father's brother's daughter, a woman in her early twenties was asked for by a relative of the latter's husband. The match was encouraged by her mother's cousins, one of whom travelled to visit her, to 'convince' her to accept, saying, 'You know what she's like. 'No, I don't want to get married!' However, on returning from the visit, her mother's cousin said, 'You see, she said 'I don't want to marry.' Perhaps she already has a suitor.' Later, she said 'Maybe she's not a girl,' but 'She's not a bad girl.'²⁰³ But the prospective groom had said, 'I don't want a pig-dirty girl!' Whether or not the girl in question was untouched is in some senses irrelevant; her adamant refusal was enough to make her geographically distant relatives wonder.

These examples show that occasionally it is precisely to kin that one *cannot* turn. Knowledge that might jeopardise the household's ability to construct new kin must not be shared with existing relatives. In such cases Meskhetian Turks sometimes turn to other neighbours for support, precisely because they are not even 'no-one' (potential kin). Zülfia told of her annoyance with a neighbouring Meskhetian Turkish household, whose eldest daughter had prematurely given birth to a stillborn illegitimate child. The household insisted that the young woman had been in hospital for an operation on her neck, although when the television news showed a baby in an intensive care maternity unit the young woman was heard to comment that, 'It looked just like that.' Her younger sister further broke the illusion by saying that her sister was well, and had just lost a little weight during her week in hospital. The denied birth caused a rift between this and Zülfia's household; the latter was highly critical of the parents for not preventing their daughter's behaviour, and for their deceit.²⁰⁴ Zülfia was further disgusted at the young woman's mother's companionship with a Russian woman during this period, which she took to be partially responsible for influencing the daughter's unacceptable behaviour. They had attempted to keep the terrible secret within the household, and failed largely because another neighbour working at the hospital had seen the stillborn baby and spread the news through the village. But the fact that two geographically close relatives of this household were given in marriage that summer suggests that the local Meskhetian Turkish community did not learn of it.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Nor, probably did the father, since his refusal would be questioned by his elders.

²⁰³ *Belki kız değil. Kütü kız değil.* She spoke at the supper table in Meskhetian Turkish, supposing that I would not understand.

²⁰⁴ The rift continued for three months, until the marriage of a relative of the young woman provided the occasion for the women to co-operate in preparing for the wedding.

²⁰⁵ Conversations about the young woman with other relatives gave no hint that they were aware of anything amiss. Although of course if they did know they would have hidden the fact from an outsider like myself, they had previously unwittingly provided information by talking in Meskhetian Turkish when they believed I did not understand.

Despite such evidence that relatedness is not necessarily a trustworthy guide to a person's qualities, marriages continue to be arranged between relatives, which further demonstrates that there is more at stake than the suitability of two individuals. It illustrates that being related is seen as innately desirable, and of value in itself. A wealthy female doctor resident in Tashkent stated, 'If a person has seen difficulties, as I have, it is better to take one of one's own than an educated person. All the same he will become a man in the morning.'²⁰⁶ Marrying a relative consolidates existing links, which, it is thought, can be trusted to help in times of 'difficulty.' It also provides some reassurance that the in-laws will not bring disrepute to the family, although the examples given above show that this is not always reliable. Just as the principle that kin through the father 'count' more than relatives through mothers and sisters is maintained, in spite of the practical evidence of daily life in which such distinctions play little role (see chapter three), so too in choosing marriage partners, the ideal of trustworthy relatives is retained despite evidence that relatedness is in fact a poor guide to character.

That it is a group of relatives whose interests are represented by the wedding, rather than those of two young people, or even of their immediate households (as illustrated above in the attempts to avoid affines with bad reputations) is further demonstrated by the manner in which the match is formally agreed upon, and the ceremony which authenticates the marriage. In both cases, those who make the agreement are elder men who are not resident in the households concerned. Once a girl has been requested in marriage,²⁰⁷ the elder male relatives of her father must be consulted. If they approve, an event known as *şerbet* (after the sugary drink drunk on the occasion) is hosted on a Thursday by the bride's household, attended by men from both sides. Male representatives, *vekiller*, of the two households undertake the formal agreement of marriage, known as *ali alah*, *ali verah*, or 'we give, we take.'²⁰⁸ The two

²⁰⁶ *Esli chelovek trydnosti videl, kak ia, luchshe vziat' svoi chem uchobnyi. Sabahinen včë rovno chelovek stanitsa.* Note that here she was speaking mostly in Russian (but used Meskhetian Turkish *sabahinen*, 'in the morning, the next day,' in the middle of the phrase), despite speaking to a Meskhetian Turkish audience (she was not making allowances for my presence). This is possibly due to her having to use Russian in her work as a doctor.

²⁰⁷ This entails the visit to her household of a few of the groom's relatives, who are mostly female, although the young man usually comes along to see, if not to talk to, the girl. See chapter three for more details.

²⁰⁸ The Meskhetian Turkish language of marriage uses everyday terms for obtaining a bride. For example, at a gathering of local women which included her son's wife's mother, Sevde said that she had 'taken' the daughter of another woman present. She used the verb *almah*, just as the male representatives do in their agreement. *Almah* means 'to take,' as well as 'to buy,' and is often used imperatively: 'Take the bucket,' 'Take [eat] bread,' or 'Buy (my) cheese.' Correspondingly, the bride is 'given.' The verb *vermeh* means 'to give,' but the English translation lacks the trace of obligation present in the normal usage of *vermeh*.

representatives are respected elder relatives, but not the couple's fathers. Sitting with the community's men, they are asked formulaic questions by a *şahat*, witness, who may or may not be a mullah. Together, these three men have responsibility, *cavap*,²⁰⁹ 'before God, before the people' for the marriage agreement.

The witness first asks the g'rl's (father's) representative,

'With God's order and permission of the Prophet and the followers of Imam Azam, in the witness of this community, have you given Kamal's daughter, that is, Aygün, for Halil's son Hasan, as his own and proper [wife]?'²¹⁰

The girl's father's representative is asked, three times, 'Have you given?' (*Verdi verdin mi?*), to which he replies 'We have given' (*Veri verdoh*). A similar question is then put to the groom's father's representative, concluding with 'Have you taken?' (*Ali aldin mi?*). He thrice replies that they have taken, and the agreement is concluded with a prayer led by the witness. The groom's representative gives money to his counterpart, the two men embrace, and *şerbet* (sugared water) is served.



18. *Ali alah, ali verah*: asking for the bride.

Although *ali alah, ali verah* is the formal arrangement of marriage, it is only attended by men (women rarely know what is said), and therefore it is the drinking of *şerbet* or the giving of the first gifts that is seen by women as finalising the agreement. Thus, for

²⁰⁹ *Cevap* (T) means 'answer'; similar Uzbek words are *жаъоб* [djavob] 'reply, answer,' and *жаъобгарчилик* [djavobg'archilik] 'responsibility.'

²¹⁰ This translation is based on a Turkish transliteration of my transcription of the Meskhetian Turkish words. Thanks to Gülnur Akturan for her assistance.

example, they say that 'after *şerbet* has been drunk, there is no going here and there.' Although not officially married until the *nikâh* ceremony shortly before the wedding celebration (see below), after *şerbet* the bride is referred to as if married. As one woman declared, 'The men are doing *ali alah, ali verah*, then we will drink *şerbet*, and then she will be ours!' She is described as *nişandi*, 'betrothed,' as the groom's family have *nişan etti*, given her a gift. This 'can be a ring, a dress, even a needle, anything, as long as there is something from their household (*onlargil'dan*). This means that she is theirs.'

Before the marriage can be consummated, and hence usually before the wedding celebrations, the couple must be married by religious rite.²¹¹ Again, it is not the couple or their parents who consent to the marriage at *nikâh* but their elder representatives, further illustrating that it is related persons who are to marry, rather than individuals with independent characteristics or desires. *Nikâh*, or *ahd*, takes place without many people knowing, and usually does not require the spoken consent of, or even the presence of, the couple concerned. A man whose daughter married soon after I arrived in Oktiabr'skii explained,

'They don't let women in there. A man comes from the woman's side, and a man comes from the groom's side. They are asked whether they will answer for the bride, that she agrees to marry; and the same for the groom. Then the mullah reads prayer. It is our registration, like ZAGS the Russians do. If *ahd* is not done, they can't sleep together. They can sleep like brother and sister, but... They do it quietly because if there is someone who thinks that they should not marry - doesn't say anything but thinks inside himself that they should not marry - he can take a thread, and twist it round and tie up the ends, then put it under a mattress, and they will not live together²¹². So they do *ahd* quietly, with few people there.

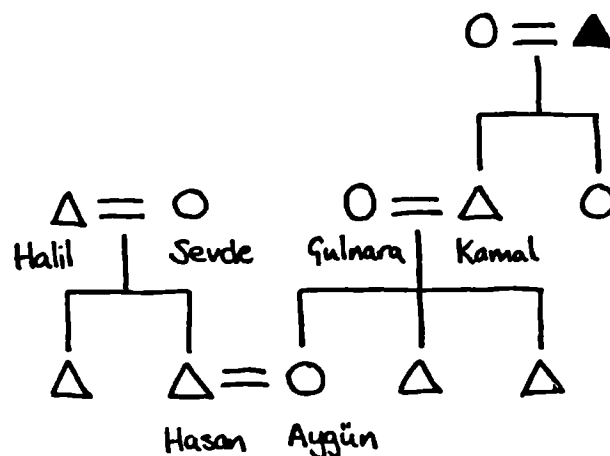
I don't know when they did *ahd* for my daughter, but my father does. Father decided everything. You saw how I was at the wedding: as if I had come as a guest! If my grandfather had been here, father would have been nobody. If there is someone older, you are nobody. If my father had not come, my older brother

²¹¹ The marriage formalisation is known as *nikâh işte*, or *ahd işte*. *Hukox*, [nikokh] is Uzbek for 'marriage,' *ax, ð* [akhd] means 'agreement.' In Turkish, *ahdetmek* means 'to promise solemnly, to take an oath on'; *nikâh* is 'betrothal, wedding' (*nikâhlı* – married; *nikâhsız* – unmarried, out of wedlock).

²¹² Others said that doors should not be opened and closed while *nikâh* is being done, as this would harm the marriage. Fear of malign influence was such that at the only *nikâh* that I was ever aware was occurring, when it was suggested that I might watch, the bride's *yenge* insisted that, 'She mustn't see,' *Görmeyir*. Notably during this *nikâh* both the couple and their two female *yengeler* were present, and doors were opened and closed.

should have come.' Was your daughter asked whether she agreed? 'I don't know. I don't know when they did *ahd*. I have never been there when *ahd* has been done; I just know that we do it. I don't know when *ahd* was done for me; I wasn't asked.'

The couple, then, are barely involved in the agreement and formalisation of their marriage. Further, they, and particularly the girl, are rarely explicitly consulted as to whether they want to marry, and their consent is taken as read from their silence. Explaining why she was not present at her own *nikâh*, one bride pointed out, 'They know that if the bride does not agree the wedding would not have got to here.' It is unusual, however, for the bride or indeed the rest of her household to be able to counter the wishes of elder relatives. The story of the giving of Aygün in marriage to Hasan provides several examples of the authority of elder relatives, particularly men, and marriage as a communal decision and undertaking. Hasan was known to have long wanted Aygün as his bride, and once she was eighteen, his parents, Halil and Sevde, visited her parents, Kamal and Gulnara, to make the request.



19. Hasan, Aygün and their immediate kin.

Kamal's resident sister told the story:

'Halil-aka came round, and said 'I'm not leaving until you say yes.' Kamal said 'If you want it so much, I already agree, but she won't agree.' Aygün was inside, walking around. Gulnara was also walking around; she didn't come and sit with Kamal. It was so hard for him, so uncomfortable. They stayed until midnight! He just sat there, head in his hands. They sat there, waited. But she [Aygün] kept saying no. When they left, it was terrible. Halil-aka said to Kamal, 'You have very much offended me. How can you act like this? Keep me waiting like this?' It was terrible when they left.'

The next day, however, Hasan pointed out 'your bride' to his mother as Aygün walked past their house on the way home from school. So Halil and Sevde continued to persist, and Müştel, Kamal's cousin, got involved. 'Müştel-aka came in, sat with Aygün, put his arm round her, saying *benim kızım* [my daughter]. They were talking for two, three hours. I came in, but he sent me out. He told her the story of his life! He told her about his first wife. At first she [Aygün] said only no. She did not say yes, but she kept quiet. Once she is silent, it means she agrees.'

The reference to Müştel's first wife is important because she had not wanted to marry him, because they were cousins. The day after the wedding she became ill for a year, and refused to see him. They divorced, and Müştel remarried, but his first wife did not. Aygün gave her own version of this conversation:

'Müştel-aka had drunk some vodka, was a bit drunk, and came and sat with me. We talked in Russian. He said 'I like chatting with you in Russian.' He sat with me for over an hour. He persuaded me. To start with I didn't say no immediately; I thought I should listen to my elders, but I was very silent which meant no. He told me the story of his life. He asked me whether I knew about his marriage. I said 'yes' immediately. He asked whether Malika [his second wife] was his first wife. I quickly said yes; I was embarrassed. He said 'I have my work, and when I come home... I respect my wife, as the mother of my children. But... What does she have? I have my work; she doesn't have that. But Hasan, he loves you. That is the most important, that when he comes home... he loves you. His schooling isn't important. He loves you.'

On other occasions Aygün emphasised that she had not actually said yes, but had simply ceased to say no. Kamal's sister continued,

'Then Müştel-aka went to Gulnara. 'I can argue with Kamal, I can scold him, but I can't with you. I have eaten your bread. I can't argue with you.' He said to her 'Say either yes or no, only don't say no.' He said this so many times. Gulnara laughed, and eventually said yes. Then Kamal agreed with Halil-aka by hand. They shook hands. Halil-aka wanted to drink *şerbet*, so that no-one else would come asking for her. But Gulnara said 'No, we will agree by hand.' The next day

Gulnara went to market, and when he came home after lunch, Halil-aka came running over to drink *şerbet*, with the suitcase²¹³ in his hand!

Gulnara had gone to Tuapse, and when she came back she scolded me. 'How could you agree without me?' What could I do? Kamal was here; he is the father, of course. I didn't know what to do. Thankfully I had just cooked bread that day; it was beautiful bread! Kamal drove to town, and bought food, sweets and meat. I washed everything and cooked everything. I made *aş* (special rice dish), everything was ready. And she came home and didn't have to do anything. She should have said thank you! We waited for her, 7pm, 8pm. We didn't drink *şerbet* until she came home. She came in and cried, didn't even look at the suitcase. But she had already agreed. Now she is telling everyone that 'They gave her without me' but she had already said yes.'

Gulnara, Aygün's mother, gave a different version of events. A month after the agreement, she was still angry.

'I didn't give her! I wasn't here! I was at the market in Tuapse. I came back and there were loads of people here, making *aş*. 'What's going on?' I thought. When I heard I sat and cried for an hour. I argued with him [Kamal], I argued with his sister. Her father gave her. He agreed and they immediately brought round the things, dresses, etc, so we wouldn't go back. They persuaded him. I think it was that *babka*²¹⁴ [her mother-in-law]. She talks to him when I'm not here; she doesn't say anything when I am. He can't say to them straight that we don't want it. The day before I had said to them that we didn't want it, there wouldn't be a wedding. Not this year. And the next day, when I am at the market, he agrees! Aygün passed all her exams with top marks. At the end-of-school evening all her teachers were crying, 'Why did you give her in marriage? She could have entered Institute for free.' If you pass the exams with good marks, you can enter for free.²¹⁵ It is as though a life is finished. It's all over, finished. And they are saying that the mother is against the wedding, the father agreed. Let them say it. I didn't want it. But I think that Aygün already loves him. I think she must love him. They have known each other for a lot of years. For a long time they have said at school, Hasan loves Aygün; Hasan loves Aygün. I think she must love him. I cried for nothing!'

²¹³ Containing gifts; see the discussion of *bohca* below.

²¹⁴ *Babka* is a derogatory Russian term for an old woman.

²¹⁵ This is probably untrue, since the family do not have *propiski* (residence permits).

Gulnara was concerned, as Aygün had been, that Hasan had only finished seven years of schooling, whereas her daughter had excelled during eleven years at school. And, just as Gulnara blamed her husband, he blamed her, although his concern was more with their financial situation:

'We did not want to give her this year. A good family, that is no question. But we did not want a wedding this year. Last year I took debts, and I have just got money back in my pocket; I want to feel the money there. Now we have to take debts. Our relatives were telling us to give her all the time; we had it up to here.' To Gulnara he said, 'It's your fault. You did not keep to your word. You said we did not want a wedding this year, and then...'

Although all three explicitly abdicated responsibility, all were pressured to agree by elder relatives, as is hinted at in their narratives, demonstrating the power of those relatives with higher status (due to their age and gender) to alter the course of the lives of the members of one household. These stories show that marriage is a collective decision, and that those individuals whose lives will be most affected by it have little influence over the decision. While young men usually have more say in when, and to some extent whom, they marry than do girls (stipulating, for example, that she should not be fat), this is not always the case; often young men are similarly persuaded by older relatives. As one mother declared, when asked whether her son wants to marry the bride chosen for him, 'Who asked him? It's not his choice.' Another man, married for twenty years, revelled in telling the story of his betrothal, in which he was taken by his cousin to buy food for New Year, and later, when drunk, told he was to marry the girl who had served them.

Most young people do not attempt to refuse a marriage; Aygün's refusal was probably only possible because she knew that her parents were not convinced. A girl's steadfast refusal to marry would be interpreted as suspicious if it did not mirror her parents' plans. Men, too, have little influence once the wedding process has begun. Alizar has been married for twenty-five years. The oldest of four brothers, he had a reputation for 'going walking' (*gulait (R)*). As his sister reported, when his parents found him a bride,

'We told him to go and have a look. He didn't go. Then we drank *şerbet*, and again told him to go and have a look, to go and talk to the bride. He didn't go. He said, 'You have already drunk *şerbet*, the wedding will happen.' So we had the wedding, and he still walked around. The bride was sitting at home with us, with the two children, waiting for him. There was talk about letting her go, but my

father would not have it. He loved his grandchildren, and said that Alizar would come home eventually. He did, but they do not love each other. They live together, but it is not good. Now he does not go walking, but it is not good.'

This experience ensured that when the family came to marry their next son, he saw and liked the bride before *şerbet* took place. But Alizar's experience demonstrates that even a head-strong eldest son cannot really prevent an unwanted marriage, and shows the unfortunate consequences for both partners when this occurs.

Theft and Divorce

There are two significant exceptions to the exclusion from marriage negotiations of individual opinion and choice on the part of the young couple, although both in their own way prove the rule, that individual characteristics (other than physical beauty) play a negligible role when choosing a spouse. The first of these is the continued and acceptable practice of young men 'stealing' brides. 'Stealing a bride' is an option available to young couples in love, when one or both sets of parents are against the marriage. One young woman, now twenty-five with three children, reported that her husband Hamid stole her ten years ago. Her parents had wanted to give her to a wealthy man, but he was fat, so she had agreed to marry Hamid. A man may also steal a girl who does not return his affections, or one he simply sees and likes the look of, as occurred a few years ago when a cousin of my host spotted a girl at a wedding, and took her home with him.²¹⁶

I was told that the young man invites the girl, and possibly her brother, into his car, as she is going to or from town; or the couple agree to meet up in town and run away together. Alihon spoke proudly of having met his future wife through her cousin with whom he sold meat at the market. After a couple of meetings he 'bet' with her: he would meet her at a certain time, take her to milk her household's cows, and then take her home. And thus it happened: they met; she milked the cow and left the milk in the shed, and then Alihon drove her away without her parents' knowledge. Once she arrives in his home the girl is considered to be his wife.²¹⁷ I was told that after a couple

²¹⁶ A couple of my informants were slightly concerned that unless I said I was married, or wore a *kasinka* (*R*) (headscarf) at weddings, I would be stolen. I remain unconvinced that I was at risk, given the likelihood of my very un-Meskhetian Turkish protest. But the possibility of theft remains a genuine concern. One man refused to allow his younger daughter to travel alone to a neighbouring village to visit her married sister in case she were stolen on the way. (The girl went anyway, without his permission, and did not get stolen).

²¹⁷ Although I was not told so explicitly, I suspect that *nikāh* (the religious marriage agreement) occurs before the couple consummate the marriage. A delay between a bride arriving in her

of weeks, the man's parents go to the girl's parents and apologise, explaining what has occurred. Thereafter, all is 'normal.' If the girl were to return home after these two weeks, she would never be asked for in marriage, as, irrespective of what may or may not have happened, she would be considered tainted. In some cases a wedding celebration may be held after the theft; Alihon's relatives planned to hold a wedding but then his father died, so the festivities were cancelled.²¹⁸

Stealing a bride is usually only an option if the young man takes the initiative, but on occasions when the girl is complicit, such as the case discussed earlier of the girl found with a Russian man in a café in Apsheeronsk, the activity is still described as 'stealing.' 'That's what we call it. He stole her, but her family took her back.' Another man told the story of his father's sister who was even more actively involved, and was said to have 'stolen' her husband.

'Faria-bibi stole him. Yes, she stole him. That is what they say. I wasn't there, so I don't know, but they say that she stole him. They say that she followed him around. He had no mother, no father; they died when he was young. They were three brothers and three sisters, and had lived without parents since childhood. Faria-bibi fell in love with him, and she followed him everywhere. She had many brothers, seven, and they said to Hasim-aka, 'You are walking out together. Either marry her, or we will do an end to you.' That is saying it politely; God knows what they actually said. I wasn't there.'

He mentioned another woman who was said to have stolen her husband. Her brothers did not want her to marry him, but then one day, 'they saw her walking in front, and him behind, walking along the road. Perhaps this is what they meant, that Faria-bibi stole Hasim-aka! They saw them walking along the road, and said 'Go, go home.' Yes, then they married.' The significance of this comment is that women usually walk slightly behind men, in particular their husbands, and in this case the young woman seemed to be acting as the 'husband,' the person with greater status, and hence the one who had undertaken the theft.

These latter examples demonstrate that to say one stole a bride camouflages activities which, were marriage not to result, would be shameful for the relatives of the concerned. In other cases the arrangement avoids the need for considerable expenditure on a wedding, or enables the acquisition of female labour when celebration

new home and the consummation of the marriage is usual at ordinary weddings, since consummation occurs on the second night after her arrival.

²¹⁸ The relationship between death and weddings is discussed in chapter five.

is inappropriate, such as following a death of a close relative. Stealing a bride is not viewed as shameful, and once the parents have adjusted to the new reality, a stolen bride is treated much the same as any other. She is not discriminated against by her husband's parents, but nor does she have greater freedom than other brides.

Thus stealing a bride provides an opportunity for young men, and in some cases also girls, to choose their own spouse. But in all cases the choice is made on the basis of no more than two or three meetings. And, like other marriages, the selection is based primarily on the girl's physical beauty, and thus no real assessment is made of her character, nor in most cases of her opinion about the match. In practice the individual suitability of stolen brides is usually no more nor less guaranteed than that of their sisters whose marriages are arranged through or to distant relatives.

The only occasion when a full awareness of the individual characters of the couple has any real influence is in divorce. Divorce does not seem to occur very often,²¹⁹ but when it does it is not particularly stigmatised. If the couple have registered their marriage, they must divorce officially, in order to be able to marry again. But many Meskhetian Turks have not 'done ZAGS' (the official registration ceremony)²²⁰ and therefore the man may simply leave. The marriage agreement made at *nikâh* is dissolved when the man says, *Ben sene üç talah koydum*, 'I have put three *talâh* on you.' This means that the woman would have to marry and separate from three other men before he may marry her again. A man may say two *talâh*, or one, but it must not be said in jest. The man who explained the procedure could not translate *talâh*. When I asked whether it is Arabic, he replied 'Arabic, German, English, I don't know. It's the same for all Muslims.' After this statement has been made, it would be a great sin were the couple to sleep together, since 'the prayer that is read at *nikâh* leaves of its own accord.'

In practice, a man does not have to 'put *talâh*' on his wife in order for them to separate; he can just take his things and leave. Cafar explained, 'I would take my documents; if I had any money, I would take that.' He said that his wife would keep the house and 'her things' (those that she brought with her at marriage), and he would leave carrying a suitcase of clothes, his photo album and his tools. If a couple has children, the wife remains with them in the marital house, since 'the house is left for the children.' If the couple have no children, the man stays in the house that was bought for him, and the woman leaves.

²¹⁹ As mentioned in the introduction, I was unable to collect quantitative data which would enable me to estimate how many marriages end in divorce.

²²⁰ For recent couples, this is because they lack the correct official documentation and therefore are not allowed to register the marriage.

Cafar said that a woman does not have the right leave her husband. 'If he asks her, 'Do you want to live with me?,' and she thinks but then stands up, she does not have the right to decide. If she stays sitting, and immediately says no, he should leave.' In practice when a couple do separate, the woman's kin often talk as if she instigated the divorce. One woman left her husband in Rostov, and now lives with her two daughters, parents, and brother, his wife and child. A relative said that, 'She and her husband argued, and she came home to her parents. He immediately married again.' The ex-husband was said to be 'a bad man: he drank lots.' But it is unclear in this and other cases how much a woman could make or influence such a decision. As discussed in this and the following chapters, women are not expected to express opinions about their marriage, and are severely criticised if they complain. This suggests that the descriptions of past husbands as 'bad men' and the woman's active part in the separation are an attempt by her kin to deflect criticisms of the woman's character, rather than an accurate reflection of what occurred.

Since a woman's status can only increase if she is married, and has children, it is uncomfortable for her to be left living with her parents and her brother. This is particularly so after her parents have died, and once her brother's wife is senior enough to be respected in the community, as one is left living in 'someone else's house.' Furthermore, a divorced woman is very unlikely to remarry. 'No-one will take her,' since she is not only older than other possible choices, but is also not a virgin, and may come with another man's children in tow. Although older men sometimes do marry women who have been married before (since a young girl's family is unlikely to agree to such a match), they are more likely to choose a woman who has been widowed than divorced.²²¹

Divorce is less of a hindrance to men since they may and do marry again. A man of twenty-five whose first wife died a couple of years after marriage, leaving one child, remarried twice within two years of her death. It was said by his kin that he divorced the second wife because she was not good with the child. But as others noted, divorce is also unattractive to a man since he does not want 'anyone else with my wife.' Another man said that if a man divorces his wife he is laughed about, because he cannot even live with one woman. Before the third marriage of the twenty-five year old his cousin declared incredulously, 'He has thrown out his second wife and wants to marry a third!'

²²¹ In the rare cases when a man does ask for a divorcee in marriage, the man may not be a desirable husband; there are likely to be good reasons why he has been unable to find another wife.

Note also that one of the humiliating *kūv* names discussed in chapter three refers to a man who divorced his first wife and married again.

But despite the slight criticism of men who do divorce, and the disadvantageous position of divorced women, divorce itself is not generally seen to be sinful or wrong. That it is possible provides a further route by which men and, to some extent, women may express their opinions about a marriage arrangement. But this option is only available after the wedding, by which time an alternative marriage, at least for women, becomes highly unlikely. Given the importance of marriage, and children, for the status of all Meskhetian Turks, and the extent to which all are socialised to accept the choice of their relatives, it does not really provide a viable outlet for an individual's frustration.

Conversion through debt

I have so far demonstrated that marriage is an agreement, a union, between two groups of kin, rather than two individuals. As a minimum these groups consist of the households concerned; the parents and siblings of the couple's parents; and other senior relatives including siblings of the couple's grandparents. The extent to which any person is involved depends on how close he or she lives to the key households concerned. I further argue that through the wedding process these two groups change from being 'no-one' to one another (that is, strangers, non-kin or relatives only through marriage) to being treated as kin. This transformation is symbolised by, and in part executed through, a series of transactions between the two groups, and the related community, that constitutes a series of debts. The final repayment of these debts concludes the process that converts nobodies into relatives.²²²

Within the context of marriage, although there is no explicit inequality between wife-givers and wife-takers, in practice the groom's household gains a daughter and her labour (cf. Bloch 1989:93). In calculating when to marry their sons, and whether or not to give their daughters, parents consider the need to have a young woman in the household to undertake the majority of mundane tasks. A household with several sons and only one daughter may refuse a request for her marriage, until one of their own sons has married, for just this reason.²²³ In addition, the groom's parents will ultimately

²²² Some couples are already related prior to marriage, as discussed above and in chapter three. However, in most cases they are not closely related, and the wedding exchanges enhance the existing relationship.

²²³ At least, this is how parents may plan to arrange the marriages, although the fear that they may not get another offer for their daughter often prompts them to agree to a wedding before it

gain grandchildren. Although a young couple's children are the grandchildren of both sets of parents, a daughter's children are not seen to be as significant as those of a son. The father of one woman recently married, and now pregnant, denied that he would soon be a grandfather since neither of his sons were yet married. Since status is dependent largely on one's relationship to others, and high status on having sons and grandsons, the groom's household ultimately gains in both practice and principle, even if this gain is not expressed or perceived as a gain against the bride's natal kin.

Although the Meskhetian Turks do not consider those who give to be inferior to those who receive, the process of marriage focuses attention away from the acquisition of individual members on the part of one group.²²⁴ A series of exchanges between the two households, made as gifts for the couple and gifts for their relatives, acts to create relatedness between the two groups. Thus the result of marriage can be perceived not so much as the acquisition of one woman's labour by one household (although in practice this is of course what happens), but as the acquisition of relatives by two groups of 'no-ones.'

Gifts to the couple

As discussed in chapter two, monetary transactions between relatives are not common, and when they do take place, they follow the rules of the market rather than those of hospitality and generosity, as elaborated in chapter three. But at and before weddings, close and more distant kin give the hosting household large sums of money, in a manner which is integral to the celebration of the marriage. In this sense the wider community of relatives temporarily acts like a household, labouring together and fulfilling obligations to share resources.

The most significant expenditure is on gifts to the couple to whom each side has obligations. The groom's household provides a house, which initially consists of a room in his parents' house, but eventually (for all but the youngest son) a house will be bought or built. The bride's relatives must provide furniture, bedding, crockery, and rugs to furnish the home. These are effectively the couple's inheritance, since a deceased's possessions are not divided on death, but are given to the youngest son,

is really convenient. They may also be overruled by other relatives, as were Kamal and Gulnara, as discussed above.

²²⁴ Among the Merina of Madagascar inequality is felt to be inherent in the giving of something, which, in the case of marriage, is a woman and most of her offspring. Because Merina marry within the *deme*, a group of kinsmen considered to be equal, the inequality inherent in gift-giving is countered during the marriage through a formalised ritual in which the wife-takers are humiliated and thus made to seem inferior (Bloch 1989).

who remains in his father's house. Fulfilling these obligations is a duty to one's children as much as is arranging their marriage.

Other gifts are given individually to the bride and groom. The first of these are the *nişan* gifts, one of the symbols of betrothal (see above). Then the *nişan chemodan* (betrothal suitcase) is given by the bride's family to the groom. It contains the clothes to be worn at the wedding: a suit, black shoes, a shirt and tie; a watch, wallet, couple of towels, eau de cologne, and, usually, a ring.²²⁵ But more significant are the gifts given to the bride, known as her 'things,' *urba*, or *bohca* (literally a bundle in a scarf). *Bohca* is usually given in instalments, one suitcase each time the groom's relatives visit the bride before the wedding, to be shown in full at *şerbet* or when they come to collect the bride.



20. Displaying the *bohca*.

On each occasion, the gifts are displayed by the groom's *yenge*, his godfather (*kirva*)'s wife, to all female guests. In every suitcase lie two or four²²⁶ stems of plastic flowers, which are held aloft as she declares, *Gulleri! Bakli olsun!*, 'Her flowers! Let [their life] be happy!' Next comes a box of chocolates: *Taltisi!*, 'Her sweetness!', so that their life will be sweet. Thereafter come the clothing: skirt suits, dresses, headscarves and petticoats, jackets, cloth for dress-making; as well as shoes, slippers, a small sewing kit, and towels; and a bag containing items to make the bride beautiful: bottles of

²²⁵ While these items are theoretically bought by the bride's family, in fact the groom's often make up this suitcase themselves, but give less *harc* (wedding payment, see below).

²²⁶ During life, Meskhetian Turks do things in even numbers: food is put out in an even number of dishes, flowers at weddings are given in pairs. At death, odd numbers are required, most notably of the items of food brought to feed the grieving household (see chapter five). This is the reverse of Russian and Armenian practice, in which odd numbers of flowers are given at weddings and birthdays, and even numbers brought to a funeral.

perfume, a small mirror, henna and often makeup. *Bohca* also includes a watch, gold ear rings, gold necklaces, and several gold rings²²⁷. Each item is held aloft by the *yenge*, who announces what it is, and, if appropriate, whom it is from. The jewellery is put onto the bride by her *yenge*.

A bride takes none of her old clothes to her new home, bodily marking the disjuncture between her old household and her new.²²⁸ Instead, all that she is to wear is provided in her *bohca*.²²⁹ In a similar manner, when a bride arrives at her new home during the wedding she is wearing a light-coloured dress, of a style suitable for wearing visiting. Before the main celebration commences she is undressed by relatives of the groom and dressed in a hired wedding dress, usually fairly publicly behind a blanket held up so that she cannot be seen. This 'total 'taking over' of the bride is part of her incorporation into her new kindred (Bloch 1989:98). That the re-dressing serves a ritual as well as decorative purpose is indicated by the inconvenient, cramped manner in which it occurs, and the very fact that the girl is helped to dress, rather than left in private to clothe herself. The *bohca* gifts are further symbolic in that they are all new and attractive, as well as appropriate clothing for a married woman: dresses with long skirts and sleeves, petticoats, and several headscarves. They are chosen by the mother-in-law and her relatives, who usually do not know the girl's size (some will never have seen her), demonstrating again that marriage joins persons fulfilling roles, rather than individuals with specific characteristics.

Bohca includes gifts from the groom's other relatives, and those who have not provided material gifts give money, *bohca parası*, after the *bohca* has been displayed. But the money is pocketed by the bride's mother-in-law. Thus an apparent contradiction: the gifts for the bride are kept by her in-laws, the side that is meant to be giving them. Indeed, Meskhetian Turks themselves comment when a mother-in-law does not pass on (to the bride's *yenge*) a ring or necklace, given by a sister or aunt. But others explained that *bohca* is a debt. The bride's mother-in-law must give gifts to those relatives when they marry their sons and daughters, just as they give to her bride. For this reason, at Aygün's *şerbet* betrothal) Sevede pocketed a ring and a necklace, and 3,000r. The groom's relatives make a written note of who gives what because, although

²²⁷ These have large red or pink stones in their centres, and very rarely fit well.

²²⁸ A couple of women discussing old wedding traditions mentioned an old practice of the girl's *yenge* looking back into a mirror as she led out the bride, so that 'nothing comes with the bride from her father's household (*babagil'dan*). Although this does not occur today, its meaning is very similar to that of the *bohca*

²²⁹ Since *bohca* consists of good clothing, suitable for visiting, the gifts are somewhat impractical for daily life. It also does not include underwear (other than thin tights and bras which it would be inappropriate to display publicly. Therefore, in the months following marriage the bride's parents bring her items that she left behind: her coat, thick tights, more socks

the *bohca* is officially for the bride, it is her mother-in-law who becomes indebted. She, or at least her household, will later repay the debt to those who give gifts to her daughter-in-law by contributing to the *bohca* for their sons' brides. Furthermore, the gifts are for the bride as part of her new household, not to her as an individual, nor to her natal household.²³⁰ The groom's household's gifts to the bride are fulfilment of their obligation to clothe members of the household, but gifts from others to the bride can be used to discharge the household's debts.

As they repacked one of the suitcases already brought for Aygün, Gulnara and her brother's wife discussed which items of Aygün's existing clothing they should add, to fill up the suitcase. 'It should look as if they're giving a lot,' even though Gulnara would actually be 'giving' these items. Thus, although the bride's *bohca* is a gift from, and responsibility of, the groom's mother, the bride's family helps to provide a good display. Similarly, although it had been agreed the Sevde would produce the *nişan chemodan* (betrothal suitcase) for her son Hasan, Gulnara added a shirt, good quality socks, and eau de cologne. While a sense of competition exists (the groom's family seeks to impress the bride's relatives with the quantity and quality of goods that they bring), even at this stage the two households work together, to make as good an impression as possible.

Aygün's *bohca* was not unusual; relatives of most brides supplement the *bohca* in this way, whether or not the two groups have a prior kinship connection. In some cases it is to ensure that the bride has the necessary essentials – new underwear, toothbrush, and the like – but more often the additions are existing, albeit relatively new, possessions, packed to increase the volume. Thus, although there are guidelines for what is expected in material terms from both sides of a union, in practical terms, both are aware that they share responsibility for making the union impressive to others. Although this sharing of responsibility begins before the couple are married, and the two sides are still far from considering one another to be relatives, already they quietly work together for the public success of the union of the two groups. The sharing of money or items bought with money in this context is reminiscent of the sharing that occurs within a household and between relatives during habitual daily life (see chapter two). It illustrates that the two groups have begun to act as kin. That they are also slightly competitive is no contradiction; on an individual basis kin are also competitive and critical of one another.

²³⁰ This financial integration of the bride into her new household is visually represented as she arrives at her husband's home. He and two friends stand on the roof and shower her with coins and sweets.

This joint responsibility is also recognised in negotiations over the *harc*²³¹, a sum of money (usually between 2,000r and 5,000r²³²) given by the groom's relatives to the bride's natal household. It is a contribution by the man's household to the costs incurred by the girl's household in holding the wedding; that is, in giving them a bride. The sum is arrived at through negotiation, usually at *şerbet*. One woman explained, 'There is a price for a bride: if I take a bride from you, you say she is worth 10,000r. But you would not take all the money. Maybe 3,000r.' In balancing his demands, if the father takes too little, it may be said that he gave away his daughter for nothing, that she 'is not worth anything'. But if the father takes too much, tensions may arise between the bride and her parents-in-law, with the accusation that her family was greedy.

In practice, the *harc* negotiation is based on the financial needs and resources of both households. The groom's relatives 'give what they can'; or however much the bride's household can convince them it needs. Although relatives on both sides are critical throughout the negotiation, ultimately the two groups attempt to make an agreement that is financially satisfactory to both, and places neither in an uncomfortable moral position. Although it may be described as the 'price for a bride,' the quantity of *harc* given bears no relationship to the bride's personal qualities. Rather, the agreed *harc* reflects on the moral standing of the households concerned, both separately and in their combined negotiation for a reasonable sum.

Community gifts

The related community also participates in a continuous cycle of indebtedness to one another, made public at weddings. This is first visible at *şerbet*, the drinking of syrup which marks the betrothal. After the men have said *ali alah, ali verah*, the *şerbet* is passed around to all guests, served in small cups and glasses. It is drunk, apparently, 'so that their [the couple's] life is sweet.'²³³ A clean tray is then circulated, onto which the guests place 5r or 10r notes, 'to pay for the sweetness.' This money, *şerbet parası*, is for the bride, for her to buy something needed for her new life, although it frequently disappears into the wedding's general expenses. Finally, the bride's household's women pass out socks (*noski (R), çoraplar*) wrapped in handkerchiefs, *mendiller*, 'so that they don't leave our house with empty hands. They brought money, you see.'

²³¹ *Harcama (T)* and *harç (T)* translate as 'outlay, expenditure.'

²³² £50 to £125. A good monthly wage is 2,000r.

²³³ *Şerbet* is also drunk after the union has been sealed at *nikâh* (the religious wedding ceremony); and on the day of the wedding it is served to the groom's *yenge*. It is also served on other occasions when Qur'an is read, including in the month of *Mevlud*, and before a young man leaves for military service.

In the slightly frantic atmosphere of *şerbet*, as the household's women rush around the overcrowded rooms, distributing food, *şerbet*, and looking for additional socks (as these invariably run out), the symbolism of the exchange is not elaborated or discussed. *Mendiller* used to be made by the bride from the remnants of dress material given in her *bohca*, embroidered or crocheted around the edges. Today's market-bought handkerchiefs, like the socks, are items of practical rather than aesthetic value.²³⁴ But expenditure on socks for *şerbet* is a considerable worry for the bride's mother, concerned as she is not to run out, not to spend too much, but also not to give damaged items. The exchange is both specifically Meskhetian Turkish in nature, and a commitment to participation in the Meskhetian Turkish community. Provision of these socks is of such concern since it is on this that the mother is judged. In giving such a mundane item to all members of the community she is further replicating the household. Just as in the household all are obliged to give their earnings to the senior woman, who in return ensures that they are fed and clothed, so too the wedding community insists that she 'shouldn't make distinctions': that all who have given money should receive socks.²³⁵ It is also notable that it is items of highly practical, domestic use, rather than decorative or consumable luxuries, that are given; in this, the socks and handkerchiefs mirror the gifts to the couple, which are similarly pragmatic and domestic.²³⁶ What is therefore highlighted in gifts given at marriage, the most celebrated and public event of Meskhetian Turkish life, is the value attached to the continuity of domestic daily life.

Another exchange concerning the community of relatives occurs at the wedding itself. As discussed in chapter three, all who are invited to a wedding are obliged to attend. Wedding guests are expected to bring a gift. For all but the closest relatives (who purchase an item to contribute to the households' material obligations to the couple), the gift is made in cash. Collection of money is notably unostentatious. The sums are passed quietly to a relative of the host, and the sum is written down, so that it can be matched when the household in question either holds its own wedding, or needs money for other purposes (see chapter three). In Krymsk and Abinsk, 'We give 100r, at a minimum, if not one's own (*chuzhoi (R)*); if one's own (*svoi (R)*), 500r, 1,000r.' Here

²³⁴ Pairs of men's socks cost about 3 50r each. Handkerchiefs are cheaper, as they can be bought at the market as strips of printed material for 1.50r each, to be cut and hemmed at home.

²³⁵ While it is accepted that close relatives will go without the symbolic socks, when other neighbours or relatives do not receive this small gift this criticism is muttered. If they are aware that this is likely to happen some guests do not put money on the tray.

²³⁶ Some socks and handkerchiefs are included in the *zandoh*, the wooden chest of items given to the bride by her household and relatives. She is instructed to give these to relatives of the groom who visit in the early days of the marriage.

the gifts can total 30,000r or 40,000r, often representing double or treble the household's expenditure on the wedding. In contrast, in Apsheronsk and Belorechensk, while the presents given by close relatives are of similar value to those given in the west, cash gifts are usually 50r, as here neighbours cannot afford 100r. As a result, the total of gifted money is rarely more than 5,000r, and weddings are debt-incurring rather than income-generating activities for their hosts.

Although the giving of money is unostentatious, it is a vital part of the interaction of the wedding-hosting household with the local Turkish community. It is not discussed as such, but it is a financial obligation imposed when a household is invited to a wedding. Once invited, one has a duty to attend a wedding because 'it counts as a debt.' While attendance is preferred, this 'debt' can be fulfilled by sending money with another guest. This was demonstrated by Gulnara and Yıldız's actions concerning their daughters' weddings. The two households know each other because Gulnara's brother lives in the same village as Yıldız, but neither had much intention of attending the other's wedding. However, both invited the other, and both sent 50r with an apology and viable excuse (relating to the husbands' work) for non-attendance, and the matter was taken no further. Of course, invitations to weddings involve far more than a monetary transaction, as discussed in the last chapter. Failure to invite someone senior is criticised by others, while attendance at a celebration to which one has not been invited is also unacceptable. But it is notable that Meskhetian Turks do talk about attendance as a debt, much as they explain the giving of socks at *şerbet* as a return for the money received.

That it is money, and items bought with money, that are exchanged at both *şerbet* and the wedding is significant, given that in all other interactions monetary exchanges between kin are no different to those between non-kin. The debt of socks and invitations are extensions of the demand sharing common between kin, but are distinguished by the fact that they involve money. In this sense, the wedding debts force a community of relatives to act like a household, sharing both money and labour, and acting as though they are, like the household, a corporate group.

Money is also given, very publicly, to dancers at the wedding. As the pairs²³⁷ of dancers move from one end of the marquee towards the wedding table, and back

²³⁷ The dancing takes place usually in pairs, either married couples, siblings, or friends. The first dance is that of the host parents, followed by other close relatives. A 'general' (*obshchii (R)*) dance, for which versions of Russian popular music are played, occurs at least once during the evening. This is announced as being in order for the non-Meskhetian Turkish guests to dance, but young and older Meskhetian Turks join in.

again, dancing with rapid feet movements and arms circling gracefully at shoulder height, members of the audience come out and hand them 5r or 10r notes. Both dancers are given the same amount, which may not be refused, but acceptance can be delayed, and the initial playful refusal to accept forces the giver to briefly join the dance. As the dancers approach the wedding table, its four occupants rise, the bride makes a movement of respect,²³⁸ and the other three give money to the dancers.²³⁹ At the end of the dance the money is dropped in a suitcase beside the musicians, as it is ultimately used as payment for the music.²⁴⁰



21. Dancing at a wedding.

Although the money is actually payment for the musicians, it is not seen in this light by the givers, receivers, or audience. It is rather given as a very visible, public recognition of the relationship between the dancers and the givers: as close relatives, friends, or the key actors in the wedding (the couple, hosts and their siblings). While helping to maintain existing relationships, it also symbolises the building of new kin, as when men and women give money to their brides-to-be at earlier weddings.²⁴¹ The passing of

²³⁸ *Temen aliyir*, see below.

²³⁹ Previous dancers surreptitiously drop money on the table for this purpose.

²⁴⁰ The exception to this is the money given to the bride and groom as they dance at the end of the evening, when the large number of notes they are given is stuffed into the groom's pockets. It is probably given by him to the bride as the present she is supposed to receive before talking to him, and, probably, before consummating the marriage.

²⁴¹ After a couple of months of marriage, new brides may start to dance again at weddings (before this, they should be embarrassed to do so), but much as they do at their own weddings: standing on the spot and moving their hands in small circles, eyes cast down. Before starting to dance, they should make a movement of respect to the audience, and to any of their husband's relatives who give money. New brides frequently receive a large number of notes as their husband's relatives are eager to highlight their inclusion as part of their household in the community, while the bride's natal relatives give generously to demonstrate that they still support her in her new role.

money from audience to dancers to musicians, in thanks for the enjoyment, on the part of the audience, of the dancer's dancing, made possible by the musicians' music, is an integral symbol of the importance of relationships: between audience, dancers and musicians, and between old kin and new kin.

It is possible to regard the relationship between the role of money in daily, household life, and its role in the construction of relatedness through marriage, as an example of two 'related but separate transactional orders,' identified in examinations of the different meanings of money with other cultures. Bloch and Parry distinguish 'transactions concerned with the reproduction of the long-term social or cosmic order [and] a 'sphere' of short term transactions concerned with the arena of individual competition' (Bloch & Parry 1989:24). Amongst the Meskhetian Turks, a distinction can indeed be made between maintaining a group of persons in a household and the sphere of continuing relatedness, and, as in the cases described by the contributors to Parry and Bloch (1989), money from the former sphere is used in the construction of the latter.

However, the model does not fit the Meskhetian Turkish case exactly. Although Bloch and Parry argue that the 'short-term' sphere is subordinate to the 'long-term' sphere, the opposite occurs at Meskhetian Turkish weddings, in that it is by temporarily acting, and transacting, as a household (the 'short-term' sphere) that relatives create more relatedness. Moreover, the phrasing of the distinction between the spheres as time-bound is questionable in this case because the household, although not a perpetual entity (see chapter two), is not a 'morally undetermined' short-term institution, but a positively valued long-standing unit (Bloch & Parry 1989:26, see chapter three). However, the model of different but related meanings of money within the same culture remains significant (cf. White 1994). But the existence of two transactional orders in which money is used differently does not mean that money itself is perceived particularly negatively or positively in either (cf. Carsten 1989, Papataxiarchis 1999:163, Stirrat 1989). Nor is money acquired through different kinds of transaction stored or valued separately (cf. Lemon 1998, Papataxiarchis 1999:169, Pine forthcoming). Rather, it is the fact that money sharing is usually restricted to the household that gives potency to its use and display at weddings.

Concluding debts

The indebtedness of the two households continues for nearly a year after the wedding. This final debt is initiated by the groom's household when, with the *bohca*, they bring a

suitcase of gifts for the bride's close relatives, known as *sud ahi*. These are gifts for 'bringing up the daughter.'²⁴² But they are also described as a debt, not as a repayment for the daughter's upbringing, but to be repaid on the birth of the bride's first child. When her relatives first visit her forty days after the birth, they must take with them a *beşek*, cradle. At the same time, they take gifts for the groom and his relatives, giving to those in the same genealogical relation to the groom as they were given for *sud ahi*. After several arguments with his wife as to when they would have the money to take the *beşek*, one man declared that he would take the *beşek* to his daughter the following Saturday. His wife was exasperated. 'As if taking the *beşek* is that simple! I told him, they don't need the *beşek* for a hundred years, they already have one. But we have a debt to pay off!'

Once the *beşek* and attendant gifts have been delivered, the explicit mutual indebtedness is concluded. It is notable that this does not occur until at least nine months after the wedding. The two groups have, in the meantime, visited one another several times. Many of these visits are formal, prescribed following a marriage, beginning with the groom's return of the bride's *yenge* two days after the wedding. He comes with a friend, and is served *hinkali* (boiled dumplings) by his new in-laws as a mark of respect. In return, the young man is required to stand respectfully every time someone enters the room, much as in daily life women should stand whenever a man enters their presence. It is not unknown for a cat to be thrown into the room, leading to his standing and the great amusement of the bride's younger (and older!) relatives. While the serving of special food to the groom demonstrates the bride's relatives respect for him as a man, a guest and a relative, the humiliation of standing further counters any perception of an inequality between wife-takers and wife-givers (cf. Bloch 1989). A week or so later, on an agreed date, the bride's parents and elders visit her marital home, and are greeted with a special meal. This visit must occur before the bride may return, accompanied by her husband and his relatives, to her parental home in a visit known as *ayak dunumi*.²⁴³ After this cycle is completed, the bride may visit her parents at will, or at least when allowed to do so by her husband and his household.

Visits between the two households thereafter are of a more informal nature, for the holidays of Ramazan and Kurban Bayram; perhaps on the bride's birthday, and

²⁴² In Turkey, *süt parası* (*T*), literally 'milk money,' is given by the groom to the parents of the bride, in thanks for raising her (Ruth Mandel, personal communication).

²⁴³ My informants could not suggest a suitable translation into Russian of this term, and laughed at my suggestion that it meant 'returned feet' (*ayak* means foot). In Turkish, *dünür* is the father- or mother-in-law of one's child, the equivalent of Meskhetian Turkish *dungur*. Thus *ayak dunumi* may stem from 'parent-in-law's foot,' a reference to the fact that the bride returns with her new relatives.

increasingly in the manner that other relatives visit one another: to ask for advice on a marriage offer, to buy wood from the saw-mill where one man works, or for the groom to find employment. During this period the new relatives have talked, eaten bread and drunk tea together, shared news and problems. Thus by the time the *beşek* debt is repaid, the relationship between the two households is much closer than it was when the debt was taken on. Finally, of course, the timing is notable in that the need for the *beşek* indicates that the couple's parents are now genealogically related, as grandparents of the same child. In chapter three I noted that relatives are obligated to one another, primarily in terms of providing hospitality, but also in terms of treating one another with the respect that their related status implies. The cycle of indebtedness between parties to a marriage in the weeks before and the year following a wedding thus serves to establish these obligations between affines.

Daughters

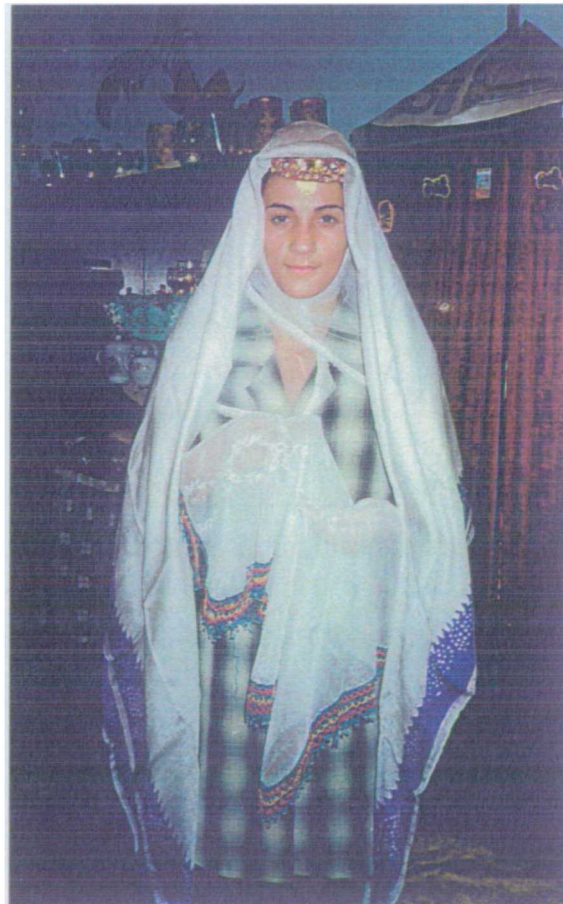
The most significant transformation of 'no-one' into kin is that of the bride, who moves from being one household's daughter to another household's daughter (in-law). On marriage, the bride's status in her new household is negligible. Although the nature of her work does not change considerably on marriage, its intensity does. Whereas previously her mother took responsibility for waking the household, now it is the bride who must rise first to light the stove for tea, and milk the cows. She is also expected to bake all the bread, and prepare all meals, including those special foods which, until marriage, she avoided learning how to prepare.²⁴⁴

The bride's position is marked by the respect that a young woman must show her husband's relatives, particularly his immediate elders. This is most obviously symbolised by the wearing of a headscarf, *kasinka*, and long sleeves and skirts. As soon as a marriage agreement has been made, the bride must wear at least a narrow headscarf whenever she may be seen by members of her future husband's family: when passing his house, when his relatives come to visit, and at other weddings. Given girls' lack of explicit complaint during the wedding preparations, it is notable that the wearing of a headscarf produces considerable protest before the wedding. 'I am going to have to wear this?!' giggled one. Another refused to leave her house while her future husband's brothers were standing in the road, protesting, 'They will laugh at me,' and, when someone put a headscarf on her head, 'You can put it on but I still won't go out.' Only when the men left did she step out, saying, 'It was necessary to cover my head

²⁴⁴ See chapter two.

(*baş'm ört gerek*) and I didn't want to.' This girl loves dancing, but went as far as missing another girl's wedding because she did not want to cover her head. Notably, however, now that she is married, she covers her head fastidiously.

The bride also explicitly shows respect whenever she is presented to her in-laws prior to and during the wedding. Whenever she enters or leaves a room, approaches her in-laws, or acknowledges a gift, the bride raises and lowers first her right hand, then her left, while slightly bending her knees. This movement is known as *temen almaya*,²⁴⁵ which can be roughly translated as 'to show respect.' When one bride was asked whether *temen* meant 'respect,' she squirmed a little, then laughed and said, 'Yes, it is for respect. Of course it is respect: I go down on my knees in front of all those people; of course it is respect!' The bride's eyes should be constantly lowered, and she should not smile, on this or any other wedding-related visit. Initially, embarrassment often makes the bride giggle and look quickly around, but by the time of the wedding, when hundreds of guests are present, the bride is demure, nervous probably scared.



22. A bride in *katha*.

²⁴⁵ In Turkish, *temenna(h) etmek*, means 'to salute.'

On these occasions, she wears traditional head-wear, *katha*, with her head completely covered with a large red scarf, a *yüz örti*, literally 'eyes closed'.²⁴⁶ After the bride has been brought into the room, her *gurime*, husband's sister, ties money in the corner of the *yüz örti* before lifting it off. While this is anticipated by the crowd as the 'opening' of the bride's face, allowing them to see and assess her beauty, it is also 'opening' her eyes, in that her new relatives are allowing her to see. After the wedding, the bride continues to wear *katha* 'until her mother-in-law tells her not to,' which may be for three days, a month, even a year. Thereafter she wears a headscarf over her hair (tied up in a bun on the top of her head) for the rest of her life.

The bride should not talk to her husband's parents, or even to her husband's brothers, until her husband's father gives permission; she should talk using her hands. This restriction is made explicit at the wedding as the couple are led through the marquee. As the bride stands with her head fully covered by the *yüz örti*, one of the groom's friends takes the microphone and, holding two knives, asks three times, 'Dear aunts, dear grandmothers, shall I cut the bride's tongue?' (*Hanam bibiler, hanam nanalar, gelinun dili kesah mi, nisanı mı?*). The crowd each time replies *dili*, 'the tongue,' and he lifts a corner of the *yüz örti* with his knife. After the final answer the *yenge* removes the scarf completely. One man explained that this is done 'so that she does not talk to the husband's parents, or brothers, only to her husband. It is for respect. He asks whether he should cut off the tongue, or the face, so that she doesn't talk. It is respect, for his parents, brothers.'

The bride 'should only really talk to her *elti* (husband's brother's wife).' Notably her *elti* is also an in-comer, not one of her husband's consanguineal kin. Since *eltiler* frequently labour together and sometimes live in the same household (when two brothers continue to live in their parents' household, occasionally even after the death of the senior generation), their relationship is often close. Although in old age women often associate themselves largely with their husbands' kin, in the early years of marriage co-brides share the experience of being outsiders. *Etiler* may privately share complaints about their mother-in-law and her sons, although to do so publicly is unacceptable, since on marriage all brides become associated with their husbands' kin, and hence with the latter's reputation.

²⁴⁶ The *katha* itself is a small red cap which sits on the top of her head (her hair is tied back), and is secured with a thread around the ears. From its centre hangs a small gold disc, *maşar*, smaller discs, *mahmudiyirler*, hang at either side. A triangle of white netting, *leçek*, is wrapped over the *katha* and around her neck, and secured with a brooch on the right of the chest. The *foşi*, a very large white silk square bordered in purple, is draped over her head, and fastened to the *katha* with a pin. Finally, the *yüz örti* itself covers the whole of the bride's face and head. Made of net, with sequins sewn into the shape of interlocking wedding rings (the Russian and (post) Soviet wedding symbol), the *yüz örti* is slightly transparent.

Not only should a bride not talk to her father-in-law, but she should also not talk *in front* of him, unless asked a question. She should also not talk to her husband until he has given her a gift or some money.²⁴⁷ When she does speak to her husband's relatives, she uses the same names that he does, calling them sister, brother, *abla* (for brother's wife), uncle and aunt.²⁴⁸ Most notably, she must also speak of his father and mother as if her own. As soon as she begins to speak with her mother-in-law, the bride should call her *aba*, mother. After an initially uncomfortable period of about a month, most brides do this naturally. However, one bride who failed to do so was frequently criticised, personally and to others, by both her husband's kin and her own natal relatives. Her impoliteness was an embarrassment to both families, and a significant factor in her tense relationship with her mother-in-law, which only improved after a year of marriage. Her cousin said,

'Guldasta never calls her mother-in-law *aba*, *ana* (grandmother); she never calls her anything. I told her she should call her *aba*; Guldasta said 'I will never call her *aba*, she is not my mother.' Guldasta is still a child. She has not been brought up; she lived among Russians and no-one taught her that she should listen to her elders, that she shouldn't talk in front of them. She is direct and doesn't know how to make her mother-in-law love her. Not love her, but not be angry with her, so that her life would be easier. She wears her headscarf tied tight around her head; she doesn't look like a new bride. I told her that she should wear it with a little hair coming out, so that she looks like a new bride. She said 'If you don't like it, don't look.'

Moreover, although it is accepted that most brides cry a little when their parents first visit, they are expected to restrain themselves in future. But when her father visited nearly six months after marriage, Guldasta cried to him, 'I don't want to live here. I want to live near you.' Her father responded, 'That is your father, there's your mother; I am no-one to you,' adding that if he took her home now, it would be as if she had not married, and he was not going to do that. While her tears in themselves were inappropriate, worse was the fact that she complained in her father-in-law's presence. Her mother-in-law later grumbled about the incident to many people, prompting one

²⁴⁷ This may be an acceptable way of saying that she should not have sexual intercourse with her husband until he has given her a gift. Nobody said as much, but the conspiratorial tone of the bride who told me this (a year after her wedding), and the likelihood that nobody openly would proclaim this if it were the case, make it a possibility.

²⁴⁸ See chapter three. The same is true of the groom, when speaking to his in-laws. However, given that he does not live with them, at least in the early years of marriage this usage is not notable; nor does it force the young man to think of himself as part of another household.

woman to declare, 'She [Guldasta] shouldn't say that, she mustn't, she's married. With us everyone marries at sixteen. Guldasta doesn't understand.' While it was almost universally recognised that the mother-in-law in question was not a good woman, Guldasta was blamed for making herself miserable, by failing to placate the one person, other than her husband, with whom she has most contact in the first years of marriage.

Explained as 'respectful,' the bride's assignation of her mother-in-law as 'mother' is a significant marker of her structural position. When a girl marries, she moves from being the daughter of one household to the daughter of another. As one woman declared, annoyed with her son's wife for wanting to travel again to her natal home in Rostov (with the excuse of needing medical treatment), 'She's my daughter now, not theirs. I will treat her.' Guldasta's father's comments, that her husband's parents are now her parents, and 'I am no-one to you,' further illustrate the bride's explicit incorporation into not only her husband's household but also into his kin. The wrench of marriage for a Meskhetian Turkish girl, fully aware that to be a significant person is to be related, is encapsulated in the comment by her father that he is 'no-one' to her now. Although this statement does not accurately reflect the visiting practices of relatedness between married women and their natal kin, it is a stark reminder that, to be seen as a person of any status, she must become and consider herself related to people who were previously no-one, and outwardly relegate her previous kin to insignificance.

The criticism of Guldasta demonstrates that as a girl becomes a woman she is expected to switch her allegiance from one mother to another. But there are contradictions in calling one's mother-in-law mother, yet at the same time treating her with considerable respect. While she should use the intimate term *aba*, mother, the bride must also use the formal second person pronoun *siz*,²⁴⁹ which she would never do with her own parents. She also cannot answer back, or refuse tasks, as unmarried teenage girls are prone to do. A bride also retains ties to her natal household, visits her parents and siblings whenever she may, and continues to respect her natal mother's status. But whenever the two mothers are present in the same place, the mother-in-law takes precedence. A bride and her natal mother should not be alone together, to avoid opportunities for the former to criticise her mother-in-law. For this reason, a mother does not usually enter her married daughter's room if her counterpart is not present.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ As opposed to the informal *sen*.

²⁵⁰ When a son marries, but before a new house is bought for him, one of the rooms in his parents' house is allocated to him and his bride. This is usually referred to as the bride's room.

The problems inherent in having two mothers are resolved during the wedding itself by ensuring that the two mothers do not meet.²⁵¹ The groom's mother does not travel with her husband to collect the bride, and nor does the bride's mother attend the wedding at the groom's house, but must stay seated on the spot from which her daughter is led away until the honking cars have departed. Although specific women from both sides do accompany and care for the bride, the key actors are the *yengeler*, who are themselves usually women who have married into the households or kin groups they represent, and hence are also to some extent 'outsiders.' It is the groom's *yenge* who puts henna on the bride's hand and prepares her for the journey to her new home. The bride's *yenge*, usually her father's brother's wife, plays a greater role, in that as well as accompanying the bride each time she is presented to her in-laws, she also prepares the food that the couple eat on the wedding night, and stays in the groom's household for two days, until she has checked the sheet that shows that her charge was a virgin.

Although the two mothers meet several times during the visits proceeding and following the wedding, in these cases the bride's position as daughter in each household is established. During the crucial exchange they do not meet: the bride's mother never physically presents the girl as her daughter, and nor does her mother-in-law actually take her from her mother or her natal house. This enables a kind of continuity, in that there is no conflict between the two women demanding the bride's labour and respect. There is no point at which the daughter is symbolically handed over to become a woman; rather, she simply continues to be a daughter in another household.

Acceptance through Silence

When she first visited her married daughter, Guldasta's mother told her that she had waited seven years before she saw her relatives. Guldasta retorted, 'But you're used to it!' Her mother responded that she would get used to it too.

It is notable that Guldasta's failure to accept her position, and her mother-in-law as 'mother,' is unusual. Her friend Gulşan married a year later, and, following the first visit to their married daughter, her mother reported that when they arrived, Gulşan had briefly greeted them, and then turned back to talking with her *eltiler* (husband's

²⁵¹ A similar difficulty, of a young man behaving as a son to another man in the presence of his natal father, is overcome in Merina marriage ritual through the use of a professional speech-maker, who acts in place of the groom's father (Bloch 1989:96). Similarly, in southern China the bride is accompanied to her husband's home by old women unrelated to either bride or groom, rather than by her parents or other kin (Watson 1985:123).

brothers' wives). When asked whether she had been offended, her mother said, 'No, she is getting used to being there.'

For most young women, marriage represents the biggest turning point in their lives, and probably the most frightening. As noted above, her daily tasks and responsibilities increase, while her status decreases, in that she is directed by a woman she calls mother but whom she must treat with considerable respect. But most significantly, in a society in which to be a person is to be related, she is required to establish relatedness with people who were previously 'no-ones,' and to 'forget' her previous kin, at least to the extent of considering them as her primary relatives. How then does she 'get used to' the idea of marriage, to living with people she has barely met and in a place she has never seen?²⁵²

'Getting used to' marriage in this sense is of course a long process, and, despite the comments that a bride should 'forget' her natal kin, women never do. It is notable that Guldasta's mother (who has been married for over twenty years) commented on the fact that her own father, brothers and other kin, living in Azerbaijan, did not attend the wedding of her daughter, and nor did they write to say why they could not come. Although she excused this behaviour, reporting that the poor postal service meant that they may not have received the telegram and letter sent in invitation, and commenting that they would need considerable funds to travel to Krasnodar, her mention of their absence suggests that, although she did not say so, she was upset that they did not come. In this sense, she has far from 'forgotten' her kin, nor become completely resigned to her residence apart from her natal relatives, illustrating that 'getting used to marriage' is a long-term, and perhaps inconclusive, process. However, here I am concerned specifically with the practices that encourage the bride to come to terms with the marriage arrangement in the weeks after the agreement has been made.

It would be foolish to suggest that a girl does not know how her life will change; she will have seen her sisters and cousins marry, and seen new brides arrive. Yet she is unlikely to know much if anything about the reality of relations with her husband. Before marriage, Gulşan often joked about sex and men with her Russian friends. But on her wedding day she caused her relatives much amusement when she asked what would happen after she and Muhtar had sat at the table, and the guests had eaten and danced. 'After that, where will I go?', she asked. 'To the house!' 'Will the boy stay at the table?' Earlier, while helping her *yenge* to bake the *kalamem* bread for the night of the

²⁵² Even Aygün, who moved across the *ogorod* to a household she had known for ten years had only been inside her new home once before her wedding, and that was for a previous wedding.

wedding, Gulşan asked, 'I will eat with him?' Her *yenge* laughed, 'Yes! I'm not going to join you on your wedding night!'

Gulşan's naivety, in a girl exposed to Russian (more explicit) society more than most Meskhetian Turkish brides, demonstrates that sexual relations are rarely discussed. Aygün probably knew slightly more than Gulşan about the consummation of the marriage on the second night,²⁵³ as her cousin Zinfina had tried to tell her what happens. During Aygün's visit to Zinfina's married home, the latter laughed, 'On the 13th you will become a woman!' Aygün remained quiet and tutted; she did not want to discuss the matter. Zinfina continued regardless:

'The first night the table was opened in here, and we sat and ate until late. The second day he brought home a pineapple - you know, round, with leaves like this. He turned off the main light, and turned on the little light, and cut up the pineapple. He told me not to be scared. I wasn't scared. You don't need to be scared.'

Kamila, married to Zinfina's husband's brother on the same day, took up the theme. 'The groom should undress you. Mine didn't. He said 'undress and lie down,' and went out to have a smoke!' Another girl asked, 'Maybe he didn't know?' 'No, he knew. I sat like this [looking shy], and he told me to take my shoes off, and to take off the head-dress.' Zinfina continued, 'Mine undid the lock [on the dress]. He took the pins out of my hair, one by one. And I had so many in! He took them out carefully. He likes taking my hairpins out.' This was as far as she went. This displaced emphasis, on pineapples and hairpins, shows that even between very close friends, Meskhetian Turkish young women cannot openly discuss sexual activity. They can only highlight new experiences²⁵⁴ because a subject even further beyond the bounds of their then experience cannot be broached.

A woman who had been married for six years, but had no children, went to the doctor, to see whether anything was wrong. The doctor had a look, and said in amazement,

²⁵³ Abu-Lughod reports that Awlad Ali' Bedouin women consider it shameful to allow one's husband to have sex on the first night, dismissing those who are known to have committed the act as shameless peasants (1986:48). Shame may be the reason for withholding consummation until the second night among the Meskhetian Turks, but so may be sheer fatigue, or the presence of many guests.

²⁵⁴ Most Meskhetian Turks have never eaten pineapple as it is too expensive, and on no other occasion would a man remove a girl's hairpins.

'How can you have been married for six years? You're still a girl!'²⁵⁵ The woman herself reported this to her neighbours, who laughed for ages, before asking whether she knew how babies were made. 'Who would have told me?!'²⁵⁶ This woman's husband is said to be a bit 'ill,' tapping her head, 'like a child himself.' Six months later, a neighbour said of the same woman, 'It's a pity she doesn't have children to help. She's still a girl! Yes, still.' I asked whether her husband knew what to do. 'Yes, he knows what to do, but it doesn't work, it isn't successful. He wants to, but he can't. It doesn't work.' This woman's story reaffirms that sexual matters are probably not discussed at marriage. The fact that her neighbours had been told this story, and passed it on, to the extent of knowing that 'he wants to but it doesn't work,' indicates that there is some discussion, at least between older women. But, given the importance of having children, it is not surprising that such relatively open discussion only occurs in this context.

The embarrassment extends to talking to, or even about, their husbands. Zinfina and Kamila referred to their husbands as mine and hers, or occasionally to the elder as *erken*, older brother. Both obviously liked talking about 'mine,' saying 'He bought me that perfume only the other day'; 'He is taking me to Turkey. That is my prayer: I want to go to Turkey'; and 'He had my name written on the birthday cake.' When one of the brothers arrived home, the two brides rushed to bring in the shopping, before talking with their visiting cousins in giggling whispers in the corridor. Another young bride, as she waited for her husband to look her way so that she could beckon him to go home, laughed, 'I can't say his name to his eyes. I do this [tapping on another's shoulder]!' Older women, married for twenty years or more, refer to their husbands as 'mine' or 'him,' and will not use their personal name, but call 'oy!' at the market when needing their attention. Ultimately, they remain persons fulfilling roles, in which an intimate relationship between individuals is the exception rather than the rule.

Thus there is silence, a lack of discussion, about the one aspect of married life which significantly differentiates it from life before marriage. Much as it is felt one should not be told about death if there is nothing one can do about it (see chapter five), this silence forces girls to deal with the trauma of marriage only when it arises, and when they can do nothing to prevent it. This is perhaps part of the reason why they very rarely complain, or cry, once the marriage has been arranged.

²⁵⁵ As mentioned above, this is a translation of *devushka* (*R*) which means 'girl,' and, in this context, 'virgin.' I have translated as 'girl' to mirror the use of everyday terminology in the original.

²⁵⁶ The woman was not married until her late thirties, and probably did not have the same degree of instruction from her *yenge* as a sixteen year old bride would receive. And presumably, given both parties' ages and the evident disability of the husband, no-one was too concerned whether or not blood was found on the marital sheets.

This is not to say that girls look forward to marriage; on the contrary. Those as yet not requested in marriage declare that they will never marry, and those already betrothed show little enthusiasm. On the day of a visit from Hasan's relatives, Aygün (normally cheerful, hardworking, and uncomplaining) looked glum. When it was suggested that perhaps they wouldn't come that day, she declared, 'Even better,' and sat with her head between her knees, miserable but not crying. She was also capricious, and refused to put out honey, or fetch the spoons, saying, 'I'm not going to; they [the older women] can do that' and, 'I didn't want to do anything today.' Gulşan was less reluctant; once, frustrated with making supper for her brother, she said with a grin 'I'm sick of this house! Let the month [until her wedding] go as quick as possible!' But on her wedding day, Gulşan too was quiet, had a headache, and looked miserable all day.

Yet girls also expect to marry, and, after the fact, they and their relatives portray the marriage as inevitable. This is clear in the matter-of-fact manner in which married women speak of the events which led to their marriage. But it is also seen even before or soon after the wedding in question. After Gulşan married, her aunt said, 'Gulşan is a good girl.'²⁵⁷ She always said she was going to get married at sixteen. She said to her older sisters, 'Even if you are not going to marry, I am going to marry at sixteen.' But before the marriage there had been no guarantee she would marry at sixteen, since she had two elder unmarried sisters.

Aygün's construction of the marriage as inevitable was particularly impressive. A week before the wedding, a friend said, 'You think they talked before? No, they didn't talk. She didn't want him. She didn't want to say yes. To be honest, she doesn't want to now, but she simply knows that it is her fate.' Around the same time, Aygün said that for the ten years they had lived in the village, it had been said that she would be Hasan's bride. The first time she danced at a wedding, his mother gave her money, and said 'You will be my bride.' Aygün, who said she was already embarrassed to be dancing, just wanted her to go away, so said 'Yes, yes,' although she had not understood what her future mother-in-law had said! Aygün also said that she had been told for more than a year that her wedding would be on the 12th August, as indeed it was. At her cousin's wedding in March, the master-of ceremonies said to her that her wedding would be on 12th August (the date set, at that time, for a neighbouring relative's wedding). I was present at the March wedding, and remember the date as 17th August (as I wrote in my fieldnotes at the time). I said as much, but Aygün was adamant that he had said 12th. Thus, having forcefully held out against marriage to

²⁵⁷ She used the term *molodets* (*R*), literally 'good boy' or 'fine young man.'

Hasan only two months previously, she had now constructed a story which made the marriage inevitable, fateful, even right.

I suggest that it is such stories of the inevitability of a certain marriage, the general silence concerning intercourse, and the severe criticism of any young brides who do complain, that ensure that young people, and their households, continue to respect the decisions of their elders and accept marriages without overt complaint. They ensure that marriage continues to be a union between groups of relatives, represented by the persons of bride and groom, rather than the agreement or choice of specific individuals.

While on the one hand marriage expresses the unity and central importance of kin for Meskhetian Turks, it also illustrates how personal characteristics, opinions and knowledge are withheld from kin. Understanding this contradiction in particular, and the formal construction of kin through marriage in general, is important for understanding both how normal life is repeatedly reconstructed in difficult circumstances, and why the events which have brought about the difficult circumstances go largely undiscussed. In the following chapter I further consider why brides and all Meskhetian Turks keep personal feelings to themselves, and examine the relation of this practice to their experience of displacement.

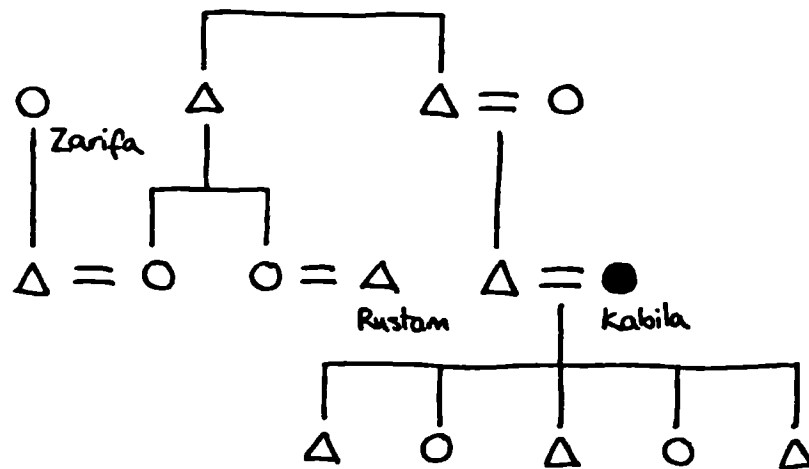
5. Death and Suffering

In seeking to understand the Meskhetian Turks' experience of displacement, in 1944 and 1989, both of which entailed untimely death, it is necessary to examine responses to death occurring in less chaotic circumstances. This examination is necessary not so much for unpicking the narratives of the traumatic events, since my informants rarely dwell on death and responses to death; but, rather, in order to explicate the socially acceptable responses to suffering, both that resulting from death, and that following other events.

None of my informants lost their lives or those of their close kin during my time in the field. However, the death of an elderly Armenian man in Oktiabr'skii provided the occasion for much local comparison of funeral practices, including those of the Meskhetian Turks. But in terms of situating the experience of death within the living community, most telling was the death, in October 2000, of a young Meskhetian Turkish woman who *gendi asdi*, hung herself.

Twenty-five years old, the mother of five children, Kabila lived with her husband and his parents on the outskirts of Apsheron'sk town. On the morning in question, everyone had gone to the market, leaving 'no-one at home,' except the young woman and her father-in-law, and, presumably, all the children. The old man sent Kabila for clean clothes for a child who had wet himself. She was gone a long time, so another child was sent to find out why his mother was taking so long. The old man then went to look himself. They had been sorting sacks of sunflower seeds for sale, and kept the sacks tied up with ropes. When the father-in-law couldn't find the woman, he noticed that there was only one rope – a second was missing – and then found her hanging in the kitchen. Although her heart was still beating, he could not hold her and cut the rope, and she died.

I learnt of the death while visiting Zarifa, whose son's wife's uncle's son was Kabila's husband. Zarifa's son and Rustam, his *bacanah* (husband of his wife's sister, and therefore also related to the deceased), came round late in the evening to drink tea and discuss the events.



23. The relationship between Zarifa, Rustam and Kabila.

Having reported what had happened, Rustam declared, frustrated, 'There was no reason; that's what I can't understand. No reason.' Someone suggested that Kabila had been ill, but this was denied. Kabila's body had been taken to hospital, but the morgue would be closed the next day, Sunday. The men were not sure whether they would be able to obtain the body to bury her, as they should, the day after her death. With the men's departure, my friends explained that Kabila was 'nobody' to them, and not really anyone to Zarifa and her family, except that Kabila was her son's wife's uncle's bride. More importantly, she was a relative of a man who should by now have married, but whose wedding had already been delayed once because his uncle died. It was to have taken place in a week's time, but would have to be postponed again. Zarifa asked whether it would do for the bride to wait a year. Someone had said that the marriage would not be a good one, and the fact that it has been put off twice is seen as evidence of that.

To those only distantly related, or not at all, the fact that the man noticed the missing rope was suspicious; one elderly woman said repeatedly that if he was looking for the second rope it meant *iş var'dur*, 'there was work,' that is, they knew something ahead of time. She insisted that there must have been 'some reason.' Two other women responded similarly: 'There must have been a reason. With five children, maybe there was a lot of work, having to feed them all. She probably got sick of all the work.' Two men, upon hearing of the death, independently said of Kabila, 'Idiot, who is going to look after the children?'

While the self-inflicted nature of this death was highly unusual,²⁵⁸ its domestic tragedy and its effects on events within the community are not. More importantly for the purposes of this thesis, reactions to the news illustrate key aspects of the Meskhetian Turkish response to suffering, both in the acceptability of suffering when expressed through illness, and the absence of public examination of personal, emotional, reasons for the desperate step of taking one's own life.

Even disregarding the murders of 1989, untimely death occurs not infrequently in this small community. Within a month of my arrival in the field, a young Meskhetian Turk died in a motorcycle crash. He was seventeen. The death was particularly tragic as his two elder brothers had also died when aged seventeen; the first in Uzbekistan, and the second, four years previously, in Krasnodar. While working as a cow herder the latter was caught out in a thunder storm, and killed by a bolt of lightning which hit his necklace. Having moved house after the death of the second son, apparently unable to bear looking at anything her son had looked at, their mother now lives in fear for the life of her remaining son.²⁵⁹ Another household suffered a similar loss when the youngest son's wife, Camila, died a year prior to my arrival, leaving a daughter only a few months old. Camila had been working in the allotment, watering and collecting sweet peppers. A cable ran through the field, part of which had worn bare, so that when she stepped on it she died in the wet field. Her husband had been at the market several hours away in Tuapse, and since the couple lived apart from his parents, no-one noticed her absence – or that of the baby, lying in a pram in the field.

While my data is not statistically significant, these examples, from a Meskhetian Turkish community in east Krasnodar *krai*, numbering approximately four thousand,²⁶⁰ indicate that sudden death must be negotiated within the community with relative frequency. People, of course, also die in old age; I knew of two Meskhetian Turkish men in their seventies living in Apsheronsk *raion* who passed away during my time in the area. The practicalities of dealing with death are discussed in the following section, and thereafter I examine responses, mostly bodily, to the death of relatives.

²⁵⁸ I know of no other cases of suicide among the Meskhetian Turks, although it is likely that families would seek to keep such information secret.

²⁵⁹ The woman had an abortion after bearing four sons, but noticed that her stomach was still expanding two months later. On returning to the doctor she discovered that he had removed only one of twins. Afraid to give birth to one when she had aborted the other, she aborted this one too. Now it was reported that she thinks this is the reason her sons keep dying, since abortion is agreed by all to be sinful (This has not stopped several of my informants from aborting). Other women dismissed this as an explanation.

²⁶⁰ Approximately 1,500 in Apsheronsk, and 2,500 in Belorechensk regions (Ossipov 2000:13). Although the total Meskhetian Turkish population in Krasnodar *krai* is approximately 16,000, the majority lives in the west, in more concentrated settlements (see chapter one).

Practicalities

Death immediately activates relationships between local Meskhetian Turks, both between relatives and other unrelated neighbours. On hearing the news, nearby men and women put aside other tasks and travel to the deceased's home. Such speed is necessary because, when a Meskhetian Turk dies, the body should be buried within a day. The body is ritually washed, and wrapped in a new white sheet. As one man explained, 'Men wash men, and women wash women. It is washed first like after toilet, then all over, and finally as necessary before prayer. After she has been washed, the husband must not look at her face, because prayer has been said. After the body is washed, that is it, no-one should look. It is covered. A mullah²⁶¹ does the washing, because prayer must be said.' His wife, on another occasion, said that that body must be immediately covered, 'because if someone cries and the tear drops onto the body, it has to be washed again.'

Before burial, the body must always be accompanied, but burial is not delayed in order to await the arrival of even close relatives; 'whoever gets there in time, gets there.' It was reported that, on the death of one man, a brother arrived in the afternoon, and sat with the body for just ten minutes before it was taken for burial. This contrasts with Russian and Armenian practices, in which the body lies on display for several days before the funeral. After prayer has been said²⁶² over the body, it is taken to the graveyard by the men.²⁶³ Not only do women not accompany the body, but they are not supposed to know the location of the graveyard. They do not, therefore, know the details of what happens at burial. Most Russian villages have their own graveyard, but it is forbidden for Muslims to be buried in a Christian graveyard, so the Meskhetian Turks use a special Muslim one, located away from habitation. The body is placed directly into the grave,²⁶⁴ without a coffin, and earth is thrown onto it, accompanied by prayer.

The funeral is but the first of many significant practices associated with death, the majority of which occur following rather than prior to burial. One of these is the

²⁶¹ If the deceased is female, the prayer is said by an elderly woman. Although 'anyone can become a mullah,' this does not include women. As one man explained, 'Women can also learn. But a woman mullah, even if I don't know any prayer, does not have the right to read prayer in front of me [because he is a man]. Women can't be mullahs, they can only be learned.'

²⁶² *Koran okumaya*, literally 'to read the Qur'an,' although in practice a set of prayers are chanted and not read from the holy book.

²⁶³ Just as women, but particularly the mother, do not accompany a girl on her journey to marriage, so too are women absent from a person's final journey to the grave.

²⁶⁴ A girl told me, 'graves for women are deeper, so that they are further away.' Her father added, by way of explanation, that this is 'because women are sinful.'

proscription on lighting the stove for three days following the death. The important factor here is not so much the lack of flame (if it is cold, particularly in winter, the stove may be lit for heat), but rather that no food may be prepared in the deceased's home during this period; not even the boiling of water for tea is permitted. Instead, neighbours are expected to provide sustenance for the deceased's household.²⁶⁵ When they bring bread or other foodstuffs they bring an odd number of loaves or items.²⁶⁶ And, on arrival at the house of the deceased, guests and hosts do not greet one another with the customary handshakes (men) and embraces (women).²⁶⁷

As discussed in chapters three and four, the provision of bread, as particular and generic food, is a core aspect of hospitality, and visits to relatives are the prime occasions for the consolidation of relatedness between households. After a death, while visiting continues to be vital, the fact that the hosts *must not* be hospitable indicates the temporary collapse of the household's normal functioning (cf. Hirschon 1989:212). For the Meskhetian Turks, commensality continues to be key, if reversed, in that it is provided by the visitors rather than the visited. This reversal is also reflected in the odd number of items provided (under normal living circumstances, food must be offered in even quantities); and in the proscription on normal greetings.

This period of reversed commensality comes to a close when, on the third day, three women wash all that the deceased has ever worn, slept or sat upon, or touched. Again, the process is unusual, in that it must be undertaken by three women, rather than one; the first two wash the garments twice, one after the other, and the third rinses and hangs the items on the line. This washing also marks the end of the period when the household and neighbours should not use soap. Similarly, on the first day following a death, neighbours ought not to work.²⁶⁸ Thus, while death is recognised as out of the ordinary by a proscription on basic everyday tasks (cooking, washing, working the land), the closure of the immediate mourning period and return of the household to relative normality, is marked by a routine task, washing clothes, undertaken exceptionally. As with the giving of household items to a marital couple, and of clothes, socks and handkerchiefs to other relatives during wedding-related events, the fact that a mundane task such as washing is significant in rituals following death further

²⁶⁵ See Sorabji (1989:206) for a similar practice among Bosnian Muslims.

²⁶⁶ See page 161, footnote 226 for discussion of the odd/even distinction.

²⁶⁷ The same is true for the forty days following the birth of a child, when the mother should not be 'greeted' (chapter four).

²⁶⁸ Meskhetian Turks similarly follow these restrictions on working on their own holidays (*bayramlar*) but also on those of other religions. Their non-Meskhetian Turkish neighbours do not usually return this respect on Muslim holidays.

illustrates the practical, domestic nature of Meskhetian Turkish responses to extraordinary events.

On the seventh, fortieth and fifty-second days after the death, neighbours and relatives again gather in the home of the deceased. Food is prepared and, with the mullah, local elderly men recite prayers for the deceased. One woman said that on the seventh day they feed the seven men who dig the grave. *Halva*, made from flour, sugar, and water, and prepared whenever a Qur'an reading takes place, is particularly associated with funerals, as it is distributed to guests who attend the forty day Qur'an reading.²⁶⁹ The presence of *halva* on a table usually indicates that a relative of the household has passed away. The occasion of the fortieth day may be held early, as convenient, but this is not the case for the fifty-second. On this day the flesh is said to fall off the deceased's bones; prayer is read in order that this occurs with ease and that the deceased does not suffer.²⁷⁰ Unlike for the funeral, to which people are not invited but come if they hear of the event in time, those who attend the seven, forty and fifty two days are those who are invited, or 'called,' to do so.²⁷¹ Death is also recognised during the two Muslim holidays, Ramazan Bayram and Kurban Bayram, in that following the morning prayer gathering, the local mullah should²⁷² pray at the houses of those who have lost kin in the preceding year, with a male representative of each local household also present.

A year after the death, relatives again gather at the home of the deceased, where special food is again prepared and prayers read. However, the year is more significant for the recognition of the relationships between the living. Although the year was described by one man as 'important, but not obligatory,' in practice the 'year' is the one occasion, other than weddings, when people travel considerable distances to visit their relatives. This is particularly so for daughters returning to their natal homes,

²⁶⁹ As mentioned in chapter three, *halva* is also eaten by newly married couples. However, at weddings it is not distributed to all guests, as it is following a funeral.

²⁷⁰ Merridale reports that in Russian Orthodox Christian belief, three days after death the soul glimpses death, and until forty days after death it is shown hell. From forty days onwards all that the soul has learnt in this period becomes real, as it faces the consequences of its actions when alive. It is at this point, and at every anniversary of death, that the living can pray for individual souls to ease their journey (Merridale 2000:32). Meskhetian Turks do not give a similar theological explanation for these, as other, practices.

²⁷¹ As at weddings, all who are called ought to do so, and it is critically noted if they do not.

²⁷² I am not aware whether or not this actually occurs as described since, being female, I did not travel to the mullah's house on these occasions. Given the speed with which the local men returned, I suspect that, whether or not the mullah made these visits, the congregation in its entirety did not.

demonstrating that the occasion of death is a socially sanctioned occasion for the enactment, if not individual display, of emotional ties.²⁷³

Bodily Response

In descriptions of practical responses to a death, there is no mention of specific provisions for managing the grief of relatives. Crying or wailing, for example, is not encouraged, and indeed the fact that the motorcycle accident victim's mother was 'sobbing, not eating, and had to be given medication in order to sleep' was commented upon by the women from Oktiabr'skii who attended the seven days. However, in reporting on deaths of relatives, women frequently mention their own bodily reaction or shock. A thirty-year-old woman proudly reported that she fainted twice when her father died. When asked when he had passed away, she could only say that it was quite long ago; it was another relative who explained that he died only a year ago. Notably the woman remembered her bodily reaction, rather than temporal details.

Another young woman, reporting the death of the father-in-law of her young aunt, Nargul, said,

'Didn't you know, Ibrahim-emi [uncle] has died? When I heard I couldn't do anything; I just stood there. Then I came to myself, and said, 'How can that be?' 'He got ill, and died.' I had written to Nargul just before that. She hasn't written. With father [of her husband having died], she can't do anything. She has probably got ill too.'

This combination of shock and illness is usual in narratives of receiving news of a relative's death. Her comment that Nargul 'probably got ill too' reflects both the latter's back pain, but also memories of Nargul's reaction to her own father's death. Nargul moved from Rostov *oblast'* to Krymsk in Krasnodar *krai* when she married. Three years later, her father died, but she was not told he was ill in time for her to return to Rostov for the funeral. When she did get to Rostov, her brothers told her, 'Father is in hospital. We'll go and see him tomorrow.' Tomorrow came and went, and she was again promised that they would go, tomorrow. Nargul said that she did not completely believe her brothers, particularly when she saw all her father's clothes being washed. When

²⁷³ For my hostess, her mother's year is a reminder of her own mortality. Having moved to Krasnodar in 1986, a year after her mother's death in April 1989 she took her four children back to Uzbekistan. A month later the attacks on Meskhetian Turks began. Whenever discussing either her mother's death or the June conflict, she links the two events.

her father's brother told her the truth, Nargul fainted. She came to, and her mother and brothers told her that her uncle was lying, and that her father was still in hospital. But as Nargul's uncle was leaving, she overheard him telling her mother to tell her the truth. Eventually, Nargul's brother sat her down and told her that 'father is not with us.' Nargul fainted again, and was ill for over a month, unable to stand up or eat.

The most striking example of bodily response to death is that of Gulpaşa, the woman who took her dough with her when fleeing her Tashkent home in 1989.²⁷⁴ Continuing the story of their flight from Tashkent, she said,

Then we all went to Baku. All the relatives in one street. We were there two years and my husband died. I lived there for a year after that. I worked for them, like we worked in the fields. Then when we had my husband's year, his brother got married. My brother brought a car from Krasnodar. He wanted to bring me here, but he didn't tell me. I didn't want to leave. My brother said I wasn't thinking of them; that people were asking whether I was going to live here [in Baku]; that my brother wasn't coming to take me home. My father had died, so the brothers should do it. And my parents-in-law cried. I said I was only going to visit and would come back. He said that he was taking me to treat me in hospital, and would bring me back. I had been here a month, and had not yet gone into hospital, when they, my parents-in-law, came to visit. Their daughter lives here [in Belorechensk *raion*], but they were here [at the house where she now lives with her brother] more than they were there [with their daughter]. I lived with them for twelve years, we were used to it. My brother said that I wasn't going back with them; he would treat me, and then send me back. And I never went back. They were offended. They stayed a month and then left.'

Perhaps most notable in this account is what is left unsaid. Gulpaşa did not mention (although I knew from other relatives) that while she was in Tashkent, she gave birth to two children, both of whom died within a year. In Baku she again gave birth twice, and these children also died.²⁷⁵ It was 'because of this,' according to her niece, that Gulpaşa's husband died, and Gulpaşa herself became very ill. When her brothers went to collect her a year later, she was 'incredibly thin and ill.' Although she is now well, or

²⁷⁴ See chapter two.

²⁷⁵ The early death of children was not unusual in the older generation; two grandmothers reported having given birth to ten and sixteen children, five and eight of whom, respectively, survived; in both cases every other child died. And a woman who was married at sixteen, when aged nineteen in March 2000, gave birth to her second child, having lost two other children in the meantime. Infant mortality, although not as prevalent as fifty years ago, nor as common as Gulpaşa's story might suggest, continues to be a reality for the Meskhetian Turks.

'normal' as one girl put it, it took nearly five years for her to recover. That her account mentions neither the deaths nor her serious illness illustrates that Meskhetian Turks are not prone to talking about their own grief or suffering.

Gulpaşa responded to such significant loss by falling very ill, a fact to which she refers only in passing. Illness, an unconscious bodily reaction to the loss of a relative, is a common, accepted and acceptable response to news of death. Concern that such illness will occur when it cannot be managed prompts Meskhetian Turks to delay the reporting of bad news, particularly that of death, just as Nargul's brothers kept from her the truth about her father. Indeed, three years after his brother's death, Nargul's uncle died, and the news was kept from Nargul's mother for several months. The older woman was staying with other relatives, and, given her high blood pressure, her sons were sure she would fall ill at the news. Only when she returned home, angry at their delay in fetching her (caused, unbeknown to her, by the funeral and forty day arrangements), did her sons tell her the news. In August 2000, when told by my partner, by telephone, that a close friend's brother had been lost at sea, I reported the news to two of my closest informants. One declared that 'He shouldn't have told you. There's nothing you can do about it here,' and the other changed the conversation to discuss sorting potatoes. Similarly, when my grandmother died earlier in the year, my mother sent a telegram, including the date of the funeral. After an initial look of shock as I told her the news, my hostess scoffed, 'There was no point in sending the time of the funeral. You can't get back in time.' I suspect that, in addition to their normal pragmatism (there really was very little I could do in either case), the women's comments reflected concern that I would fall sick at the news, and they felt it was irresponsible of my relatives to endanger me in this way.

Meskhetian Turks go to similar lengths to hide news of serious accidents or illness from close relatives. When a young woman had been married only a few months, her husband Balabek was hospitalised following a serious car accident. While Balabek's sisters and parents knew of his condition, their new bride was kept in the dark (leaving her to spend a night believing he was 'walking' with another woman because he did not return home) until the following morning. Retelling the story, Balabek's sister reported that when the bride was finally told, 'She had something in her hand, and she dropped it!' Again, the involuntary physical reaction is highlighted as the appropriate response to trauma. Similarly, pain occurs in circumstances in which discussion of personal distress is impossible. A girl who was married to her cousin fell ill immediately following the wedding celebration, prior to consummation of the marriage. She refused to see him in hospital, and although he waited a year for her to recover, she would not return to live

with him. It was said that she had not wanted to marry him because she was his cousin. As discussed in chapter four, she would have been unable to prevent the marriage on this basis once her elder relatives decided on the match.

Grief at the death of others is expected, and its expression through bodily shock is both acceptable and a cause for concern. Other trauma, if expressed bodily rather than verbally, is also understandable. Such somatisation, the 'presentation of personal and interpersonal distress in an idiom of physical complaints,' has been noted in other societies, and particularly in some, including China, in which the verbal expression of distressing emotions is discouraged both by political circumstances and cultural norms (Kleinman 1985:51; cf. Abu-Lughod 1993:145,150).²⁷⁶ As Kleinman notes, 'the body can be a vehicle for experiencing, interpreting, and communicating about emotion and social issues' (Kleinman 1986:194). Although not described in these terms by my informants, management of others' grief entails care over announcing bad news, in order to prevent illness. Beyond this, verbal discussion of loss and grief is not expected. This mirrors the limited social space for expression of other personal suffering, as discussed below.

Death and Weddings

Gulpaşa's story, of collection by her brothers on the occasion of her husband's 'year' and her brother-in-law's wedding, is representative of the common temporal coincidence of public celebration (of marriage) and commemoration (of death). Often when people travel considerable distances to visit relatives they arrive for an event following death, but also attend weddings, and sometimes stay longer in order to do so. The *yenge* at a wedding in September 2000 was a female doctor from Tashkent, who had travelled to Krasnodar not for the wedding, but for her uncle's 'year.' On learning that the young man for whom her husband is *kirva* (god-father) was about to marry, she delayed her return home in order to participate in his wedding. Given the cost of travel, it is unsurprising that Meskhetian Turks seek to combine attendance at large gatherings of relatives. Additionally, while death is obviously disruptive to the

²⁷⁶ Skultans began her work on memory and suffering in Latvia with the intention of examining somatisation. In contrast to the Meskhetian Turks' discussions of bodily pain, her Latvian informants' illness narratives are explicitly political, holding oppression and violence directly responsible for illness (Skultans 1998:20). She is aware, however, that her access to such memories in 1992 and 1993 was in part a reflection of recent political developments and were she to have undertaken fieldwork either earlier or later, she may not have recorded such explicit discourses of political oppression (ibid:12).

household of the deceased and to his or her other relatives, its effects within the wider community are most obvious in relation to weddings.

As illustrated by the response to Kabila's suicide, if a relative dies close to the planned date of a wedding, the celebration ought to be cancelled, or at least be postponed. Death in the family, even of a father, does not itself prevent a marriage from taking place, in the sense that a bride may be brought and integrated into the household. If the death occurs very close to the wedding date, and it is too late to inform the invited guests; or if the husband's household urgently needs a young woman's labour, the wedding may go ahead in minimal form.²⁷⁷ The marriage is therefore similar to that resulting from the 'theft' of a bride: religiously sanctioned through *nikâh* (religious marriage ceremony) but not publicly celebrated.

What is significant in the restriction on marriage celebration is that music is not played. Music is an integral aspect of the celebration of a wedding, to the extent that 'it is forbidden to take the bride²⁷⁸ without music, except if someone has died.' Not only that, but because most of the public activity of a Meskhetian Turkish wedding involves sitting at tables watching the dancers, a wedding without music is almost a contradiction in terms. Therefore, people go to some lengths to avoid the prohibition on music. One way is to delay the wedding if it is unclear whether a close relative is about to 'receive his passport.'²⁷⁹ Otherwise, if a person dies on the evening of a wedding, relatives may not go to the wedding to report it, allowing guests to enjoy the festivities, and instead wait until morning to report the death. When ill, a bride's grandmother's sister said several times, 'Let me at least live past the wedding.'²⁸⁰ And at the collection of a bride in October 2000, the musicians only played as she was led away from her parents' house. The groom's relatives had been told to come with musicians, but three days before the wedding, a grandfather died in Rostov. Thus, because the other side had not known about the death, the musicians came, but they did not play for dancing. But

²⁷⁷ An additional reason would be the pregnancy of the bride, and the need to hide this indiscretion through a quick marriage. However, there is no guarantee that the relatives of the father of an illegitimate child would agree to the marriage, on the basis that a woman who involves herself in sexual activity prior to marriage is felt to be a very unsuitable bride. I know of no definite cases of such marriage, which would, in any case, be kept as quiet as possible. Many brides become pregnant very soon after marriage; of those married during my field work, two fell pregnant within a month, and a further two within three months. Thus such disguise may be possible.

²⁷⁸ From her natal home to that of her husband.

²⁷⁹ 'We say it that way; he has his passport, he is just waiting for the final stamp'; that is, he is about to die.

²⁸⁰ On the day of this wedding, her brother visited. He told her a story about a woman who was very ill, but got better, since she didn't want to die while the land was still dirty, and difficult to dig a hole in. His sister agreed that there was a lot of water in the ground, and she didn't want to die now; she is afraid of drowning!

'they did the traditions,' *adatlar*, which include leading the bride out to music, since the death was considered distant enough for this not to be disrespectful.

Indeed, whenever a wedding takes place, its host asks the relatives of those recently deceased whether the wedding may be held. Referring to the recent death of the seventeen year old in the next village, one man explained, 'When we held the wedding, a boy had died in Proletarskaia. I went to ask his parents whether we should have music at the wedding. They said, 'Do the wedding as you like.' If someone has died you should ask their relatives whether there can be music; it is respectful. In the same street, same village, relative or not.' On the same basis, for forty days relatives of the recently deceased may not attend a wedding, and the period of celebration avoidance may be extended. Colloquially, 'if her father-in-law has died, she cannot go walking around enjoying herself²⁸¹ at a wedding.' At home, this extends to a prohibition on playing music and watching television for the first forty days. Music is not played at Meskhetian Turkish funerals.

Attestation of the loss of relatives and hence of relatedness is therefore integrated into the practice of weddings, which primarily celebrate the construction and consolidation of kin. While the combination of kin-death and kinship-creation is partly represented by the visitors from afar who attend both events, awareness of the local experience of death is also integral to celebratory practice, as symbolised by concerns over whether or not music may be played. Rather than death providing for the regeneration of the social order, death hinders the reproduction of new kinship (cf. Bloch & Parry 1982). But death allows for the maintenance of existing relatedness by providing an occasion for visiting.

Personal suffering

As discussed in chapter four, for a young woman, marriage represents a very significant rupture to her known life. At the same time, this rupture is negotiated by practices of continuity, both through the integration of the bride as daughter of her new household, and through the visits as relatives between the two households, which begin before the wedding and continue ever afterwards. Death also represents such a rupture, and is briefly experienced as such, in the three days of reversed hospitality.

²⁸¹ The spoken phrase was 'cannot *guliät*' at a wedding.' *Guliät* (*R*) means 'to go for a walk' or 'have a good time,' and is used to refer to actually wandering around; to young men meeting their friends in the evenings; as well as to extra-marital liaisons. On this occasion, the speaker was not suggesting that the daughter-in-law in question would do anything out of the ordinary at a wedding, but that her enjoying herself would be disrespectful under the circumstances.

But death is also integrated into the continuity of the visiting practices of the related living. On a more personal level, death and weddings share a further characteristic: the management of suffering. Despite the fact that marriage is a profoundly dislocating experience for a young woman, once the wedding date has been set, she does not complain, comment, nor cry. The same is true on the day of the wedding, and the criticism of Guldasta for her complaints, discussed in the previous chapter, shows that the expression of a personal discourse of suffering is neither expected nor acceptable.

Such stoicism is developed from an early age. Meskhetian Turks very rarely cry; children are trained not to through slaps around the head for outbursts of tears and, later on, laughter if they do cry. Pinching children and slapping them relatively hard around the head is normal practice when playing with even small babies. Although crying babies are held or rocked,²⁸² infants are expected to control themselves.

Three year old Iskender fell off the *sekū* (raised platform) onto the floor. His mother picked him up and slapped him hard, so that he again nearly fell over. Exasperated she said 'That's enough! I'm sick of it today!' Iskender again looked at those present with wide, slightly damp, eyes, but he did not cry, he just stood there. The women laughed a little, then his mother took pity, and called on Iskender to *Gel, gel ebile*, 'Come, come here.' He did not move then, nor when his grandmother laughingly took up calling to him.

Older children are laughed at, rather than slapped, or shouted at further if they cry, whether this is from physical pain due to attack by others or carelessness; or from frustration or misery. A representative response occurred when an eighteen-year-old forcefully thumped his thirteen-year-old brother on the leg. The latter, in severe pain, rolled over so that no-one could see his face, and cried silently. Nobody expressed any sympathy, and his mother shouted at him to fetch wood.

Among adults, tears are treated with impatience, whether they result from physical or mental anguish. On the morning after a *şerbet* (betrothal party), I swept the hosts' courtyard while nearby other women drank tea on the outside *sekū*. While sweeping I banged my head on a metal pole up which vines grow over the courtyard. One of the women critically muttered *Ay, sene*, 'Oh, you [idiot],' in the tone used to scold her children. As I walked out of sight with damp eyes another told me to 'calm down,' and

²⁸² At the suggestion that her six-month-old child could occasionally be left to cry, so that she could at least get the washing up done, one young mother declared that, 'If she is left to cry she will get appendicitis and swollen intestines.' However, this belief is not universally held, and relatives later suggested that she had 'lost her mind,' and had been talking to her superstitious grandmother.

to put cold water on my head. As the water supply had temporarily stopped, I pointed out that there wasn't any water, and returned to finish sweeping. Tears are no more acceptable when the pain is not physical, as they are an expression of uncontrolled emotions. Upset at something her husband had done, Lutfia talked to her *elti* (wife of her husband's brother) as the two women bundled up tomato plants. The latter did not change her tone, abrupt and raised, when Lutfia started crying; and the latter continued talking while trying to control her sobs. The conversation stopped abruptly when a third *elti* came in through the gate, and demanded *Ne oldi?*, 'What has happened?' Lutfia replied, *Hiç bir şey*, 'Nothing.' The third woman demanded again twice, in a tone not so much conciliatory as critical.²⁸³

A similar lack of patience was shown by many people towards Guldasta, the young woman whose refusal to accept her mother-in-law's effective replacement of her mother was examined in the last chapter. In October 2000, when Guldasta gave birth to her first child, her mother and father's sister visited her in hospital. Visitors to a Russian maternity ward must wait at the corridor entrance while the patient is found and comes to them.

Guldasta embraced²⁸⁴ her mother, crying. The latter asked *Ne oldi?*, 'What has happened?' I thought the child had died. 'No; I want to go home.' Guldasta's aunt had joined her mother, and the two of them laughed. Guldasta stood trying to stop sobbing by the gate in the corridor, and the two women laughed, telling her to relax, sleep, here she does not have to work. Guldasta complained that here it is boring, and that she has a headache - because it is so quiet! The older women laughed again, and told her to play with the baby; Guldasta complained, 'She sleeps all the time!' There was no movement to comfort Guldasta, only laughter, and at times the women talked more between themselves than to her. Guldasta looked miserable, gazing toward the ceiling or at her fingers.

²⁸³ Notably it is specifically personal grief and misery that go undisclosed; anger and frustration are frequently expressed verbally. Children shout at one another, as do their parents, both at their children and at each other. Husbands demand food when they arrive home from work; or raise their voices for an ironed shirt. A mother may loudly demand to know why her daughter has not started making the soup for supper, and shout at her son to fetch wood to finish baking bread. Such raising of voices is not locally limited to Meskhetian Turks; rural Russians also shout at neighbours and relatives, shriek at drunken husbands and loudly dispute debts in the street. Such exchanges sometimes draw a small audience, but are usually observed from behind net curtains. Meskhetian Turks are, on the whole, more private in their expression of anger, and keep it indoors.

²⁸⁴ Note that this is inappropriate; new mothers should not be greeted (embraced) for forty days. See chapter four.

Similarly, with regard to marriage, it is notable that at all seven Meskhetian Turkish weddings that I attended, on no occasion was the bride seen to cry during the wedding. The exception that proves the rule occurred as a household photograph was being taken, before the groom's relatives arrived to take the bride. The room was full of women and children, watching, and when the bride turned away to the window, she was repeatedly called to turn back. Eventually the woman taking the photograph realised that the bride was crying, and after calling to her again, gave up, and declared, *Boldi, vcē (R)*, 'Enough, enough,' and left the room. The other guests eventually dispersed and after a few moments the bride emerged, smiling. The delay in realising what was happening, the reluctance of the other guests to leave, and the bride's deliberate and swift presentation of herself smiling demonstrate how unprepared were those present to otherwise manage this display of unhappiness.



24. A bride stoic among guests.

The absence of tears is striking in comparison with a Yezidi²⁸⁵ wedding, to which several Meskhetian Turkish neighbours were invited. Yezidis share many of the more restrictive wedding traditions of the Turks, to the extent that one Turk commented that the wedding consisted of *bizim eski adatlar*, 'our old customs.' However, these do not include the suppression of tears. In this case the bride was more resigned to, or even

²⁸⁵ Both this household and their Meskhetian Turkish neighbours described Yezidis as being from Armenia. However, the Yezidis are more widely known as Kurdish people, living mainly in Iraq and Turkey, with small numbers in Iran, Armenia, Yemen and Germany. Although I heard an elderly Meskhetian Turk describe Yezidis as *Kurtler, vtoroi sort*, 'Kurds, of the second sort' [a reference to flour, of which the 'second sort' is cheap and low quality], I suspect he was using 'Kurd' as an insult (see chapter three) rather than a descriptor. They have their own religion, Yezidism, which my informants did not mention.

excited about, her wedding, than any of the Meskhetian Turkish brides I knew. Yet, on the day of the wedding, just before being led to join her husband by her brother, she cried in front of a room full of her family's guests. Her older brother and younger sister joined the sobbing, and soon everyone in the room, approximately forty women, young men and girls, were crying, including most of the Meskhetian Turkish women present.

Aygün, the bride's Meskhetian Turkish neighbour, who herself married only two months previously, commented, 'At another's wedding one wants to cry; at my own I didn't want to.'²⁸⁶ She used the term *chuzhoi* (*R*), 'some body else's,' or 'not one's own,' which can be understood to refer not only to an individual's, but also a group's, 'own.' I suggest that, perhaps unconsciously, Aygün was remarking on the fact that at Meskhetian Turkish weddings it is unacceptable, even unthinkable, for the bride to express a sentiment which contradicts the agreement made between the two households to make kin together. To be carried away by the sentiments of another people, which (despite affection for one's friend) do not affect one's position within the Meskhetian Turkish community, while not encouraged, simply becomes the subject of slightly incredulous conversation.

Understanding suffering

Sorabji notes that among Sarajevan Muslims, 'private grief is recognised and accepted but open and emotional displays are not' (Sorabji 1989:206). Visits following a death entail the suppression rather than expression of sorrow, and those mourning are encouraged to discuss the death, and pray rather than cry for the deceased, while recognising the relatives who remain alive. Bosnian Muslims regard as 'unseemly' and 'laughable' the wailing of Serbian and Catholic funeral rites (ibid:208, cf. Carsten 1997:173). Similarly, Lavie notes that the Mzeini Bedouin of Sinai, 'are not supposed to cry' (Lavie 1990:294). Alone with the anthropologist a girl shortly to marry laments, 'If only I were like 'Alyii, the Madwoman...Because she is the only one among us who talks about her wounds of the heart in front of all... She has no shame... And since the day she got crazy, they stopped trying to marry her off' (ibid:134).

Sorabji and her informants link the stoicism expected at funerals to the Islamic prohibition on lamentation and weeping for the dead (Sorabji 1989:206-7). While I doubt that Meskhetian Turks would, or could, cite Islamic prohibitions as the basis for their practices, the similarities of practice concerning suffering among Muslims cited

²⁸⁶ *Ne khochetsia* (*R*), literally, 'it doesn't want itself.'

here is notable. But, demonstrating that absence of tears is not a universal Islamic practice, Delaney notes that women 'moan, wail and cry' at funerals, and mothers are expected to cry at their daughters' weddings, since not to do so suggests she does not care for her child (Delaney 1991:131).²⁸⁷

For many, as Lavie's young informant notes, to openly express suffering is shameful. 'Shame' and 'honour' have been described as 'key notions' in the study of moralities of the 'Muslim world' (Gingrich 1997:153), but they are not without problems, either as analytic categories or as observed local 'systems'.²⁸⁸ They entered anthropology in the 1960s as specifically Mediterranean 'modes of thought' (Peristiany 1965:9), as structures by which a person assesses his own value, and by which his value is assessed by society (Pitt-Rivers 1965:21). One's honour is said to be relative to that of others, and is possessed by social groups as well as individuals. Although Pitt-Rivers' original essay noted that 'what honour is varied within Europe' (Pitt-Rivers 1965:21), the content and local meaning of 'honour' and 'shame' were largely taken to be consistent (Stewart, C 2001), until Herzfeld demonstrated that the Greek terms translated as 'honour' and 'shame' had divergent meanings and values for different communities within Greece alone (Herzfeld 1980, 1984). Additionally, Wikan shows that honour and shame are not necessarily binary opposites, and that the other concepts used in the 'complex accounting of value' must be examined if we are to understand how a person's value is perceived by herself and others (Wikan 1984:648).

Such criticisms notwithstanding, where local concepts (glossed as 'honour' and 'shame') have been analysed in depth they have continued to contribute to anthropological understanding. Most notable in this respect is Abu-Lughod's work on the Awlad 'Ali Bedouin of Egypt (Abu-Lughod 1986, 1990, 1993). On the basis of a detailed assessment of the concepts of *asl* and *hasham*, she states that,

'Individuals must achieve social status by living up to the cultural ideas entailed by the code of honour, in which the supreme value is autonomy. The weak and the dependent, who cannot realise many of the ideals of the honour code, can still achieve respect and honour through an alternative code, the modesty code' (Abu-Lughod 1986:78-79).

²⁸⁷ Nor are restrictions on crying limited to Muslim societies, as Wellenkamp shows in her work on the Toraja of Indonesia, who are either Christian or follow their traditional religion *Alukta* (Wellenkamp 1992).

²⁸⁸ Gingrich's formulation is further problematic as it implies that 'honour' and 'shame' are specifically *Muslim* moralities; Campbell's work on Christian Greek shepherding society, for example, demonstrates that this is not the case (Campbell 1964).

Whereas previous accounts have asserted that honour and shame are matters of public and therefore relative reputation (Pitt-Rivers 1965, Bourdieu, 1965, Herzfeld 1980:341), Abu-Lughod has shown that '*hasham* involves both feelings of shame and the acts of deference that arise from those feelings,' and thus is conceptualised as both involuntary experience (emotion) and voluntary behaviours conforming to the 'code of modesty' (Abu-Lughod 1986:107-8).²⁸⁹

Although not explicitly described as such, it is possible to understand a large number of Meskhetian Turkish practices as reflections of a 'code of modesty' similar to that which Abu-Lughod identifies among her informants. Like the Awlad 'Ali, married Meskhetian Turks wear headscarves and long sleeves and dresses; and men do not smoke or drink alcohol in front of their superiors (cf. Abu-Lughod 1986:115). Furthermore, Abu-Lughod's insistence that shame concerns both conscious voluntary acts and involuntary experiences fits with my own experience as a temporary member of the Meskhetian Turkish community. Some months after my arrival in Oktiabr'skii I was having tea with a Meskhetian Turkish household and their Russian neighbour, when five elderly Meskhetian Turkish men, relatives of the household head, arrived. I stood up respectfully, but with no internal sense of embarrassment, along with the Meskhetian Turkish women, and for a moment could not understand why the Russian woman did not stand in the presence of these strangers. With respect to the involuntary experience of shame, when taking photographs of a circumcision I was acutely aware that it was inappropriate for me to be alone among a group of men, but also that wearing a headscarf (a voluntary act) provided some protection.

However, the contexts in which Meskhetian Turks do talk of being embarrassed or ashamed, *utanmah*, are somewhat ambiguous. In Aygün's comment that she was embarrassed when Müştel talked of his former wife (chapter four), similarities to Abu-Lughod's informants' embarrassment at references to sexuality in the presence of one's superiors may be identified. But this correlation is questionable, since the whole of the conversation in question (in which he sought to convince her to agree to marriage with Hasan) would have to be seen as embarrassing. Later, when she talked of dancing for the first time (when her future mother-in-law gave her money), her reported embarrassment was of a different nature: due to being watched by many people. By way of contrast, when my hostess commented to other Meskhetian Turks,

²⁸⁹ Wikan argues that shame refers only to actions rather than aspects of the person. She notes that women feel shyness, which may be translated as 'having the power to be shamed by one's acts', but that this concept of 'shame' is peripheral to her argument regarding the questionable binary nature of honour and shame (Wikan 1984:650-51).

after a few months in the field, that I was not embarrassed (*utanmiyor*) when it came to eating, this was said approvingly.

Thus it seems that a sense of shame, both voluntary and involuntary, does govern certain Meskhetian Turkish behaviours, but to be said to be ashamed or embarrassed is not always a positive evaluation. Neither is it always acted upon, as shown when Aygün's father's sister discovered that Aygün had been meeting Hasan, her husband-to-be, at the end of the *ogorod*. Although she declared critically that Aygün *utanmiyor*, 'is not ashamed,' rather than preventing her niece's behaviour, she helped to cover her temporary absences. Nor can all behaviour that, at first glance, appears to fit the generalised ideas of honour and shame²⁹⁰ be adequately explained by reference to such a code. Perhaps the clearest example of this latter point is Rasim's refusal to speak to his sister who has 'dishonoured' him by taking a lover, as discussed in chapter three. As I noted, the siblings have a history of disagreements, and Rasim lost his friend to prison, and a year of his life on the run. Furthermore, his children and wife, and other siblings, continue to visit his sister Leyla. Thus while his behaviour towards his sister may now be excused or commended by reference to his honour or shame, failure to also look beyond such a definition might prevent a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Leyla and Rasim.²⁹¹

I have thus not attempted to systematically analyse Meskhetian Turkish morality on the basis of these two 'key notions.' But Abu-Lughod's examination of honour and shame is illuminating in relation to the expression of sentiment among the Awlad 'Ali. Loss and neglect prompt anger and bitterness, and emotional pain is accepted stoically, without tears (Abu-Lughod 1986:90,187). Indeed the bodily responses (headaches and 'shock') to news of death mirror the somatic experiences of the Meskhetian Turks (op cit; 1993:145). These responses are regarded as expressions of self-mastery, strength, and hence of honour. In the absence of an explicit code of honour amongst the Meskhetian Turks,²⁹² I have interpreted similar reactions as examples of discouragement of verbal expression of personal suffering, in the context of the significance given to one's role as a related person rather than as a specific individual. However, what distinguishes my informants from the Awlad 'Ali most significantly in this regard is that the latter have a separate discourse of poetry, sung on intimate

²⁹⁰ As summarised by, for example Pitt-Rivers (1965)

²⁹¹ A further problem with the application of at least the early conceptions of 'honour' to the Meskhetian Turks is that elsewhere it is used to 'rank' people and groups (Peristiany 1965 11). As discussed in chapter four, Meskhetian Turks do not perceive of a hierarchy of households or groups of relatives in this sense.

²⁹² I am not aware of a Meskhetian Turkish word which may be glossed as 'honour,' although this cannot be regarded as conclusive as I did not seek one.

occasions, in which the expression of loss and grief is not only acceptable but admired. Although its form is 'highly conventional', and its expression limited to culturally appropriate settings, the fact remains that this poetry serves as an acceptable, privileged discourse of defiance against the system which values autonomy and stoicism (1986: 241-242, 252). It is therefore in relation to the codes of honour and modesty that the poetic expression of suffering is possible.

Unlike Abu-Lughod's informants, the Meskhetian Turks do not have an alternative verbal discourse of personal sentiment, and thus have no acceptable form in which to express a narrative account of personal feelings. Does this therefore mean that such emotions are consciously suppressed or unconsciously repressed (Kirmayer 1996:179), or that they do not exist at all? Anthropologists have debated whether emotion is formed through narrative, raising the question of whether the absence of such a discourse indicates the absence of emotions themselves. The anthropology of emotion has recently focussed on indigenous 'emotion words' (Lutz 1988:11) or 'ethnotheories of emotion' (Wellenkamp 1995), examining the contexts in which informants use words about feelings in order to discover 'local assumptions about the persons, relationships, and events' to which such words are applied (Rosaldo 1980:20). Lutz and Abu-Lughod argue that 'emotion can be *created in*, rather than shaped by, speech' (1990:11,12). This approach is given ethnographic weight by Scheper-Hughes' work on infant mortality among Brazilian slum dwellers. She demonstrates that mothers' indifference to the deaths of their babies is not a cover for repressed grief, and must be taken at face value. Deconstructing assumptions of "natural' maternal instincts,' she demonstrates that death before the age of one is seen as evidence that the child in question lacked 'a vital life force, his or her own "will" to live' (Scheper-Hughes 1992:354,314; cf. Pina-Cabral 1986:219). Emotions, she therefore states, 'are part of culture and of strategic importance to our understanding of the way in which people shape and are shaped by their world' (Scheper-Hughes 1992:431).

Scheper-Hughes' work indicates that in some circumstances, seeming indifference as a response to death must be taken as just that – a lack of positive or negative emotion; an acceptable, even encouraged, response, embedded in tactics of survival ('bid:472).²⁹³ An absence of expression of personal suffering by the Meskhetian Turks is also 'embedded in tactics of survival,' as a culturally appropriate response to daily and extraordinary events. But this is not the same as saying that the absence of

²⁹³ She emphasises this point by noting that in other circumstances, including the deaths of those who have survived long enough to be loved, women weep freely and talk at length of their loss (Scheper-Hughes 1992:435).

speech implies the absence of emotion, or that emotion is created in speech (Lutz & Abu-Lughod 1990). Where verbal narrative of suffering is absent, we cannot assume that suffering is also absent. Cases such as that of the Meskhetian Turks, among for whom open discussion of emotions is 'nonsensical' (Abu-Lughod 1990:24), demonstrate the problems inherent in relying on analysis of indigenous words in order to understand emotions and concepts of the self (Hardman 2000, Lutz 1988, Rosaldo 1980). Beatty argues that culturally appropriate displays of emotion can be learnt, and, as anthropologists, it is this embodied practice that we should study, rather than seeking to understand the internal experience of emotions which are inaccessible to researchers in our discipline (Beatty n.d.). But others' work on silence, on the non-practice of emotion, demonstrates the inadequacy of this approach.

Silence, non-expression of grief, loss or suffering, has been shown to express meaning in itself. In chapter one, I noted that silence may be state-imposed or constructed (Merridale 2000, Stewart n.d., Watson 1994). Silence may also be a consequence of the victors writing history. As Das reminds us, 'In reading history we must learn how to read silences, for the victim rarely gets an opportunity to record his or her point of view' (Das 1987:13). Perelli notes that, even when state structures enable individuals to express their suffering, there is no guarantee that the format allows for collective consideration of either the damage done to society, or the experiences of those not directly involved in the terror. Analysing the trials of military men responsible for Argentina's 'dirty war' of 1976-78, during which large numbers of people were 'disappeared,' she notes the absence of awareness that 'the collective dimension of repression tended to be lost', such that, 'there was no place in this narrative for the common people who had not been imprisoned, disappeared, and tortured... [to] come to grips with the idea that they had also been victims of the system of terror' (Perelli 1994:50).

Additionally, 'some horror is not and cannot be articulated' (Ross 2001:272). Scarry's work on torture and war, asserting the unsharability of the experience of that pain, has been influential (Scarry 1985). Langer identifies this frustration, which he calls the 'futility of memory,' in testimonies of Holocaust victims (Langer 1991:63,74). It is also reflected in Daniel's work on torture victims in Sri Lanka:

'I do not believe that most of the victims I interviewed were unwilling to talk about their experiences because it was too painful to do so. There were no signs of contained passion. Rather, attempts to extract information were met with expressions of utter listlessness. Months later I found out that it was not so much

boredom that weighed down on the victim as it was the overwhelming sense of the sheer worthlessness of all attempts to communicate something that was so radically individuated and rendered unshareable' (Daniel 1996:143).²⁹⁴

Alternatively, trauma can destroy 'the normality of language,' so that everyday commands are heard as abusive demands (Das 1997:76), or requires new vocabulary is developed in order to describe new circumstances and events (Perelli 1994:42). Primo Levi, Charlotte Delbo, and others have noted the predicament of using ordinary words like 'thirst,' 'cold,' 'selected' and 'killed,' which have been redefined by the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust (Langer 1991:8,61,107). But others rather chose not to narrate their experiences, sometimes because they consider the experience to be 'over, finished!' (Pattie 1997:15), because they simply would rather focus on other life experiences, and do not find suffering 'very interesting' (Merridale 2000).

Yet often silence is a result of social limitations on the expression of personal experiences. It is this aspect which comes to light in Ross's analysis of women's testimonies to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She argues that the absences of narratives of women's own suffering, in terms of physical torture, also represent the absence of men-folk from the domestic world, and the loss of loved ones. She argues that,

'Silence marks particular kinds of knowing, and that silence is gendered. In other words, silence too is a legitimate discourse on pain – if it is acknowledged. The recognition of pain may be heavily reliant on acknowledgement of the meaning of silence, and of the validity of silence as a means of communicating particular kinds of experience' (Ross 2001:272).

Ross' informants were speaking and leaving silences in a context which had only recently become amenable to the types of stories they told. Notably their narratives are often grounded in the 'relatively ordered and predictable' domestic sphere, their accepted place within society (ibid:264).

Gendered silence is identified by Muecke, who describes the ideal of virtue for a Khmer woman, and notes that following forced migration, the association of family honour with daughter's virtue remains. She explains that,

²⁹⁴ However, Skultans notes that some of those who assert that there are 'no words to describe' their experiences, to people who have not shared them, do manage to talk about their suffering (Skultans 1998:17, 29).

'the silence of most Khmer women about their experience of sexual abuse should not be seen as a human response to profoundly intimate trauma but also as an implicit cultural survival strategy in their communities, for face-saving of their families, and for honouring lost parents. Their silence should not be reduced to repression, denial, or some similar defence mechanism' (Muecke 1995:44).²⁹⁵

I suggest that this type of silence is particularly prevalent among the Meskhetian Turks, in which it is culturally inappropriate for a person to express his or her individuality and personal pain. Silence regarding personal suffering thus relates to the general relegation of one's individuality as opposed to one's role and status as a related person, as discussed in chapters three and four. This understanding of silence helps to explain the relative lack of personal testimonies of suffering following the events of 1989, following deaths, and at marriage. The Meskhetian Turkish cultural context is such that confessing one's feelings is 'nonsensical' (Abu-Lughod 1990:24; cf. Karpf 1996:10,38), not only in the sense that to do so is discouraged, but also because it is not productive: on the contrary, it is feared such expression will lead to illness.

Furthermore, the wider political context in Krasnodar, discussed in chapter one, does not provide a public space for discussion and commemoration of communal trauma. In part this is due to the Meskhetian Turks' marginal political position, and their lack of influence over media and political authorities.²⁹⁶ But the absence of commemoration among the Meskhetian Turks derives from more than explicit exclusion from positions of influence. Rather, the local Krasnodar and wider Russian state context reminds them that the experience of suffering is not past but continues in the present. The failure of the state to fully rehabilitate them, and thus officially accept that they have been wronged (cf. Stewart n.d.:11), no doubt plays some role, and this failure continues to the present in the Georgian government's refusal to allow my informants to live in Meskhetia, the place from which they and their parents were deported. But as I discussed in chapter three, and return to in chapter six, the Meskhetian Turks show very little attachment to the specific territory of Meskhetia, and limited desire to move anywhere, if it can be avoided.

Far more pertinent are the Krasnodar authorities' present actions attempting to remove the Meskhetian Turks from the *krai*. The recent threats of imminent deportation are but

²⁹⁵ Das (1990b), Um (1998) and Zur (1999) also identify culturally enforced gendered silences. See also Declich (2001) and Dracul'ic (1999) on Somali and Bosnian women's silences about rape.

²⁹⁶ Lemon argues that Eastern Europe Roma lack monuments to their experience of the Holocaust for this reason (Lemon 2000:167).

the most organised examples of the antagonism towards immigrants in general, and the Meskhetian Turks in particular, which Krasnodar has maintained (with the tacit support of the Russian Federal authorities) ever since their flight in 1989. It is notable in this context that when Meskhetian Turks *do* talk of the events of 1944, or 1989, they frequently relate one to the other, and also mention the discrimination they have experienced in Krasnodar (see chapter one). One traumatic event is thus presented as linked to the others. Meskhetian Turks cannot feel secure in discussing past displacement when local conditions clearly indicate that they may be forced to move again in the future. Thus the local political context prevents public testimony of past suffering because the experience of suffering continues to the present day (cf. Fonseca 1996:243, Stewart n.d.:18). Local antagonism towards migrants means that neither 'cultural templates' nor a 'receptive audience' for testimony exist, which have been identified as necessary for full discussion and at least partial resolution of disturbing memories (Kirmayer 1996:193).

Thus personal suffering is not commemorated as communal suffering; suffering is not publicly commemorated at all. As a consequence, the experiences of 1989, and further back, of 1944, are related only in descriptive terms by those who did not themselves experience the worst. Yet the Meskhetian Turks frequently do communicate loss and suffering, although the loss in question is not that of a close relative, and nor is it the personal trauma of adjustment to living with an entirely new group of people. Rather, loss is expressed in abstracted, impersonal terms, in reference to the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the moral framework of Communism, as I discuss in the following chapter.

6. Being Soviets

In chapter one, I noted that when it is necessary to distinguish themselves from other Turks, my informants primarily adopt the term used elsewhere in Russia, *Turki-Meskhetinskii* ('Meskhetian Turks'). I also indicated that this usage is seen as a recent phenomenon. Just as the use of village names does not rely on a continued attachment to the space of the village (chapter three), so too calling themselves 'Meskhetian' does not, necessarily, indicate an attachment to the place Meskhetia. And 'Meskhetian' is not the only distinguishing label that has been attached to the central term 'Turks'; Ottoman and Ahiska have also been utilised. One man illustrated a further usage when relating a conversation with an Armenian work-mate.

Armenian: What's your nationality?

Meskhetian Turk: Turk.

Armenian: Turk from Turkey?

Meskhetian Turk: No, Soviet Turk.

Armenian: They accept you in Turkey like the Armenians accept us in Armenia!

This conversation was significant enough to be reported twice within my hearing, once in Russian with me and his family, and later, in Meskhetian Turkish, to a neighbour. It demonstrates the camaraderie between many of those displaced within the former Soviet Union; many of my informants' friends are displaced Armenians.²⁹⁷ For my present purposes, its notability stems both from the descriptor 'Soviet,' and from the disenchantment with their position with regard to others who could be considered co-ethnics.

Grant discovered that rather than considering themselves Asian or European, his Nivkhi informants insisted 'We're Soviets.' 'Most Nivkhi I knew thought of themselves as Soviets first and Nivkhi second; a good number of others, especially younger people, thought of themselves as Soviets only' (Grant 1995:40,159). For my informants, I suggest, being Soviet is *part of* being Meskhetian Turkish. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that too narrow a focus on Meskhetian Turks as a unified nationality, and the associated assumptions of the importance of territory, obscures how my

²⁹⁷ Note that this is contrary to what is expected by, particularly, urban Armenians, who have no personal contact with Meskhetian Turks. A perception of antagonism between Armenians and all Turks (citizens of Turkey, Azeris, and Meskhetian Turks), epitomised by the massacres of Armenians by Turks in the early twentieth century, persists in Krasnodar among many urban educated Armenians (and some rural people). This is encouraged by the Cossacks' and the Krasnodar authorities' faintly ludicrous assertion that the Meskhetian Turks are spies for the Turkish government.

informants conceptually 'place' themselves in the present, and perceive their past and future. I also argue that, in seeing themselves as *homo sovieticus*, it is the communal displacement from the Soviet Union that provides the focus for lament and perception of loss, rather than the personal, and nationally defined, losses of 1989, as discussed in the previous chapter.

'Earlier it was Better!'

Along with their brief stories of deportation and displacement (see chapter one), at our first meeting many Meskhetian Turks told me,

'Earlier it was better (*Ran'she biulo luchshe (R)*). You should have come fifteen years ago. Then things were good, everyone was equal. The best way of life is Communism.'

Unlike the displacement stories, 'earlier it was better' is repeatedly lamented publicly and in detail. It seems acceptable to bemoan one's loss in terms that were inclusive not only of all Meskhetian Turks, but also of their present and past neighbours, in Krasnodar and Uzbekistan. In her work on early 1990s Moscow, Ries identifies a similar genre, of 'complete disintegration' tales, through which her informants talked their way through the upheavals of the collapsing Soviet Union.²⁹⁶ Ries asserts that such stories mediated contemporary reality, 'making it possible to think, act and survive' (Ries 1997:51). Just as the Muscovites' tales were only partly nostalgic, but also 'implied some hope, albeit muted, of the possibility of relief' (ibid:112), so too the Meskhetian Turks' 'earlier it was better' tales reflect as much on their present trying circumstances as on the selectively remembered past.

One frequently mentioned aspect of the earlier and better times under Communism was the fact that goods were available at prices that my informants could afford, and which rarely varied. One man described at length prices during the Soviet period:

'The dollar:rouble exchange rate used to be 1:30 kopecks! People were paid up to 400r a month, but if you just worked for a *sovkhos* you got 60r a month. But life was still better. A flight to Uzbekistan then cost 54r. With 500r the whole family could fly to Uzbekistan, stay there for a week, buy clothes and fly back. Now it

²⁹⁶ Ries identifies a second key genre of 'absurd tales,' which performed a similar function, but which I do not discuss here as they do not relate as closely to my material.

costs 2,500r simply to fly there. To go visiting to Krymsk, including buying sweets and biscuits to take with you, you needed only 15r. And no-one took milk into town to sell; the *sovkhoz* collected it morning and night, and took it straight to the milk factory. There was plenty of milk, and it was sold in the shops, 15k for a bottle, 30k including the bottle. And people say that under Communism things were bad!

Another man said, 'Earlier it was better. A sack of flour cost 13r, and I brought home 100r or 150r.²⁹⁹ Plus afterwards I worked in the field; I worked in the fields (*polom zanimal'sia* (R)) in Uzbekistan too. Everyone could live on their pay, but if you wanted more you worked in the *ogorod*.' For this man, working in the *ogorod* is no longer an option, but a matter of earning his living. And a woman, sick of daily separating the cream from her milk, lamented that a kilo of butter (which she makes from the cream) costs 57r, but it used to be 3r40k. I asked when this was; 'In Soviet times, until 1991.' The price never inflated; butter, until 1991, was always 3r40k a kilogram. Non-Meskhetian Turkish neighbours agreed. 'Oh, the Soviet times (*sovetskiiia vremia* (R))! It was better in the Soviet times. Then we bought meat, fish. We bought three litres of soured cream (*smetana* (R)) every two weeks, and only ever used butter, except for frying pies (*piroshki* (R)) and potatoes. We didn't use sunflower oil then. For 10r we could buy provisions for the whole week, and pay was 80r, 70r.'³⁰⁰

The focus on food prices, visiting costs and wages is unsurprising, given the centrality of visiting and provision of food in Meskhetian Turkish society, and the difficulty with which this is now provided (see chapters two and three). Similar is the nostalgia for the public holidays (*prazdniki* (R)), days of relaxation with huge parades, for which 'people used to prepare for weeks, and bought new clothes.' But the attachment to the Soviet Union is more theoretical than enjoyment of public holidays or a concern with prices. I was repeatedly told, 'Now it is not interesting. It was interesting under Communism. You should have come earlier; it was interesting then. Now it is not interesting.' One

²⁹⁹ At the time of fieldwork a sack of flour cost 300r, and monthly wages were between 1000r and 2000r.

³⁰⁰ I do not have sufficient data regarding non-Meskhetian Turkish villagers to ascertain whether this lament is as common among them as among my informants. But the Communist election successes in Krasnodar support such a conclusion. Additionally, on a local train in Rostov *oblast'* I witnessed a lively debate between passengers about whether it was better now or under the Soviet Union. One man, a builder, repeatedly asked a woman whether it was necessary (for the state) to build. She said no, and that she wasn't needed by anyone other than her family. He and others pointed out that they used to go on holiday every year, and now don't have the money to go anywhere. Another woman retorted that then she did not get paid enough to go on holiday, but refused to say whether she now earned enough to do so. The crowded carriage was split between those who were amused, and those demanding that the debaters shut up, as they were giving the others headaches. While in itself proving little, this incident does indicate that the Soviet period remains a topic of public debate.

elderly man reported that, when, three hundred years ago, Russia took over Meskhetia, they were told, 'You will pay no taxes, not serve in the army,' but, 'They were poor, they were not helped.' Then, when Soviet times began, they began to have to pay taxes, and serve in the army, but they were also made literate (*gramotnyi* (R)). Life got better, they got richer, because 'they [the Soviets] helped.' Another man, not known for his political engagement, expounded the virtues of communal ownership:

'Whoever says that under Communism it was worse, doesn't know how to live! For example, earlier no-one had their own lorry, no-one had their own tractor. Everything was state [owned]. If you want to cut hay, you pay him money, and he cuts it. And like that, then there weren't private things. No, what are you saying? Earlier it was better.'

Recent historical research on the 'extraordinary times' of the 1930s testifies to the excitement felt at participation in the construction of a new, forward-looking society, even by some of those who had most reason to be disenchanted with the Soviet project (Fitzpatrick 1999:1, Grant 1995, Hellbeck 2000, Kotkin 1995). As Grant notes, 'Much of the zeal demonstrated on North Sakhalin kolkhozes attested to real patriotism and the spirit of building a new society of which many if not most saw themselves a part' (Grant 1995:105). Such analysis, of the daily experience of the Meskhetian Turks in either the 1930s or their years in Uzbekistan, has not been undertaken, and thus positing their then attitude to or involvement in the Soviet project is unsound. Yet perception of themselves and their relationship with the state continues to be framed in terms of their position as 'Soviets,' and their comments regarding equality, homeland and work suggest that this attachment is based on more than nostalgia under trying circumstances (see also Tomlinson forthcoming). They also suggest that Verdery's assertion, that under Communism persons constituted themselves in opposition to the Communist regime, does not apply equally to all citizens of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Verdery 1992:10).³⁰¹ In the remainder of this chapter I discuss my informants' concepts of homeland and work, and examine how these relate to their experience as Soviet people.

³⁰¹ The extension of Verdery's argument is that, with the collapse of Communism as the 'Other' against which people constituted themselves, *other* Others have been sought out for blame and self-constitution, and the new Others are those ethnically different from oneself. As discussed in chapter one, the Meskhetian Turks do not seem to have participated in such 'totalising' of others in order to conceive of themselves.

National Homeland?

A central theme in most work concerning the Meskhetian Turks is their relationship with their 'homeland'. As discussed in the introduction, this academic emphasis on the territorial does not reflect the limited role it plays in Meskhetian Turkish life. That is not to say that the *rodina* (*R*), homeland, is not discussed, nor that they do not talk of places from which they feel they come. For instance, after visiting her son in the army in Rostov, a Meskhetian Turkish woman was driven to the station by her son's sergeant. Having discovered that he had also served in Uzbekistan, she explained that she was born in Uzbekistan and they had been thrown out of there. The sergeant asked, 'Where is your homeland really?' 'I don't know; I was born in Uzbekistan. Only the old people lived in Georgia. The homeland was in Georgia.' She referred to homeland as the place where she or her ancestors were born.³⁰² Fifteen-year old Güzel was working from the same principle when she asked her father 'Where is our homeland, Uzbekistan?' 'No, Georgia.' 'Georgia?! Why? Did we live there?' Her father said 'We're from Georgia.' When Güzel asked 'Why?,' he replied that that there had been a relationship between Georgia and Turkey. 'Then Georgia was part of the USSR. Like Batumi - there's a bridge between Turkey and Batumi. Now Batumi doesn't have a relationship with Turkey, with Georgia, with anyone.' Understandably dissatisfied with this garbled argument, Güzel declared that Uzbekistan is her homeland, because that is where she was born.

Others sometimes talk in terms of where their ancestors lived: 'Georgia is our homeland, where our fathers lived, it is our land.' But such statements are made largely in the pragmatic context of where they might go, if they were to move. Although the man who made this statement said he wanted to go to Georgia, his choice was based on the fact that he is 'ill, very ill,' with asthma, and so he needs to 'live in the hills where the air is clean.' But since his elder brother is presently looking for work in Turkey, with a view to taking all his brothers, their wives and children to Turkey, this man's choice, and the reasons for it, are little more than talk.

More often, homeland is talked of in the abstract, without reference to specific territory. Two statements are heard far more frequently than others, namely that, 'We have no homeland,' and 'Our homeland is the Soviet Union.'³⁰³ For example, one man explained, 'There are Turks in every town, every village, because we do not have a homeland to go to. There are Turks in Baku, Turkey, Belgorod, Germany, Stavropol.'

³⁰² The root of *rodina* (*R*) is the same as that of *rodit'sia*, to be born.

³⁰³ Note that these are not necessarily complaints, but rather pragmatic statements. See below.

With a little bitter laugh, his companion quietly added Georgia to the end of the list. And, when criticising Crimean Tatars, who left Krasnodar for the Crimea only for some of them to return, one woman scoffed, 'Stupid people: they have a homeland, and they leave it! They have a homeland. Little by little, in time it will become theirs. We don't have a homeland.' On another occasion, while I was sitting with Cafar and his cousin, the men joked that my family should move to Russia. I replied, 'If all is fine at home, why move? If all had been well in Uzbekistan, you would not have left.' Cafar laughed, 'We were *thrown out* of Uzbekistan.' His cousin interjected, 'We have no homeland,' and Cafar continued, 'We have no homeland; our homeland is the Soviet Union.' Still laughing, he said 'Soon we will be chased out of here, and will go from place to place until we are thrown out of that one.'³⁰⁴

I suggest that these two statements, 'We have no homeland,' and 'Our homeland is the Soviet Union,' when examined together, shed light on Meskhetian Turks self-perception in post-Soviet Krasnodar. Both the statements, and my informants' self-perception, are rooted in Soviet concepts of groups and their entitlements. Indeed this particular focus on *rodina*, homeland, although common elsewhere (as witnessed by numerous studies of territorial identification and repatriation) is a particularly Soviet and post-Soviet concern.³⁰⁵ The basis of the Soviet concept of homeland can be found in Soviet Nationalities Policy. Prior to the Revolution, Lenin and Stalin had given considerable thought to the 'nationalities question.' Although Marx and Engels believed that 'national differences' were disappearing (Guy 1978:692-694), Soviet policy was based on the premise that nations must be helped to develop, in order that the people, recognising the benefits of freedom from Tsarist oppression, would voluntarily join the political project, the federal Soviet Union, which gave them this freedom (Eidlitz Kuoljok 1985:157). The ultimate 'coming together' of nations into a communist proletariat remained the long-term goal throughout the Soviet period (Slezkine 1994, Smith 1996).

However, in order to be developed, nations first had to be identified. Stalin's oft-quoted definition of a nation as 'an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up, manifested in a common culture' (Stalin 1953[1913]:307), was used as a guideline

³⁰⁴ Cafar was possibly laughing because he knows me well, and because he didn't actually go through the pain of being thrown out, as he moved to Krasnodar in mid-1980s, although claims that he wanted to go back to Uzbekistan before the riots. His cousin was more serious, possibly as this was the first time I met him, but also because his family were among those evacuated.

³⁰⁵ That 'homeland' continues to act as a powerful emotive tool in Russian politics was illustrated in Putin's inauguration speech on 7th May 2000. He talked about Russia being great, promised greater economic freedom, thanked us for having put our trust in him, and said 'I promise to work honestly and openly.' His final words were, 'We have one homeland, one people. We have, with you, one common future.'

for the ethnographers sent out to find national groups. It is important to note that Stalin's definition includes the requirement for a common 'territory,' a position which developed in refutation of the Austro-Marxists' position that territory was not a prerequisite of a nation-state (Slezkine 1994:416). Once identified, all non-Russian Soviet nationals were granted territorially defined units, and all nationally-defined groups resident in other nations' territorial units were granted their own, smaller, units. The Meskhetian Turks were not defined as a nation, nor did they attain nationality status and an autonomous republic, nor any other territory-allocating status. Indeed, as shown in chapter one, for parts of the 1920s and 1930s they were defined out of independent existence, and counted as either Azerbaijanis or Georgians. In administrative terms they had, and have, no territory; that is, no homeland. What is pertinent today is that this is not a matter which they contest. In stating that, 'We have no homeland,' they consent to the Soviet definitions of what constitutes a national group, of what such groups are entitled to, and to their own designation as not one of such groups. 'We have no homeland' means 'We are not a national minority to whom a territory has been allocated,' and it is not stated with bitterness towards those who failed to allocate them land.

It is in this context that their discussions about moving on from Russia must be considered. Aware of their tenuous position in the *krai*, many Meskhetian Turks discuss leaving Krasnodar, primarily for Turkey. Despite Aydingün's assertion that (among Meskhetian Turks living in Turkey) Turkey is seen as a homeland, none of my informants made such a statement (2000:176). Similarly, international calls for repatriation to their 'homeland' Georgia are not mirrored in my data (Adam n.d., Aslan 1996, Forced Migration Projects 1998, Laczko 1998). Notably Uzbekistan is not suggested as a destination, either by my informants or by the international community. Even among those with no immediate plans to move, discussion of alternative places of residence is based on pragmatic grounds of where they would be accepted or whence they could afford to move, rather than on ideal images of a territorial homeland. One man said, 'We want to have a small piece of land where we, the Meskhetian Turks, can live, work as we want.' He said he didn't want a separate government, but to be 'left to live as we like.' He was suggesting that Turkey should provide such a piece of land, on the basis that 'We are not accepted in Georgia.' But he was concerned that only the rich could afford to move to Turkey, leaving the poor left in Russia. Another man similarly declared that 'The people (*narod* (*R*)) is tired because they have lived in three different places. It would be better if they agreed to go to one place, and then all went together.' He lamented that they are divided, half planning to

go to Turkey, half to Georgia. But he also said, 'I don't care whether I am a citizen of Russia or of Georgia. It is all the same.'

Another man declared that he and all his brothers planned to go to Turkey, but a few days later his elder brother stated that many people had left for Turkey, but returned to Russia. 'Life is better here. The people don't want to move again. We'll stay here even if we are kicked out.' Another man talked scathingly about his cousin Lochin's plans to move to Turkey.

'He went one time and didn't like it. He came back. Let him go to Turkey! I don't understand; half of his relatives are in his present village, half in Bratskii [a village in Apsheronsk]. It's like you coming to live here; none of your relatives are here, are they?! I do have a cousin there. But how can he buy a house next to him? I heard that he lives in a flat. Lochin is going to go, and if he finds work, one by one he is going to call for his family, bring them over. For what?'

One of Apsheronsk's ncher Meskhetian Turks declared that people who have a very difficult life always want to go somewhere else, and it is for this reason that people talk about moving. But, 'They don't have \$100, so where can they go?'

Occasionally households do leave, and their departure is marked by the purchase of their bedding mattresses (*minderler, duşekler*) by others, to be given when a daughter marries. But despite many discussions about moving, particularly to Turkey, few actually depart. Among those who have the necessary documents and even money, it is an interesting question as to how many people are actually leaving Russia. One family declared with increasing certainty that they were going to join the husband's sister in Turkey. But then they bought a bigger house; one of their daughters was given in marriage, and, when I left Krasnodar, they were planning to hold their son's wedding the following year.

Whether or not they are actively planning to leave Krasnodar, many of my informants demonstrate a scepticism regarding their future in the *krai*. Often this is illustrated in the disinclination of many to improve their surroundings. For example, Akram paints interior walls in attractive patterns, speckling the walls in pink, green, blue, yellow. His wife told of the incredible eight-roomed house he built in Tashkent, in Uzbekistan, with parquet floors in every room, and ceilings that were so colourful that they 'made your head spin.' Once the house was finally finished, the couple lived there for only two months, before the events in Fergana forced them to flee first back to his parents' house, and

then, with his mother and brothers, to Krasnodar. Now they live in an old three-roomed house, described by their son, when his mother changed the wallpaper, as 'a pig-sty.' Akram does not want to re-build or even re-paint their house, because they do not know when they will have to move again. Similar feelings were expressed by Ali, who described how his grandfather built a house in Georgia, and they were thrown out. Then his father built a house in Uzbekistan, with 'two storeys, hot and cold water, all comforts,' but they were 'thrown out again.' Now Ali is building a house in Krasnodar, but he said that he does not know whether his children will live in it.

Another man used the same excuse for not having rebuilt his household's sheds or toilet, both in dire need of repair.

He declared that he would have long ago built these, but 'My soul will not lie down,'³⁰⁶ that is, his heart is not in it. He said that he did not want to build for somebody else to use. 'It is good when you build and you know that it is for yourself. But we do not know when we will be thrown out again. I never thought we would be driven out of Uzbekistan.' He also discussed the long table he had started to make, but on which he had stopped working when he argued about it with his wife. He wanted to add 60cm to the existing table; she wanted 30cm, because adding 60cm would make the table too large to fit on the *sekū* (raised platform). So he hasn't made it at all. 'Why waste materials? Build, you tell me!'

This contextualisation of his laziness in a lament over their uncertain circumstances may convince the anthropologist, but his wife of twenty years was unimpressed. However, in the context of other men's reluctance to build, plus their lack of consensus as to where, if anywhere, is preferable to Russia, this man's tale illustrates that while they are truly 'displaced' (in the sense of not feeling tied to their present place of residence) they are not certain as to where or how to become 'emplaced,' if indeed this is what they desire at all. Thus although many Meskhetian Turks would like a place to be allocated to them, 'in order to survive as a community' (Ray 2001:401), their sense of community is not bound up with identification with a specific place, and nor is their desire for a 'homeland' in this sense equivalent to demands for return to Georgia.

³⁰⁶ *Dush ne lazhit'sia (R).*

Soviet Homeland

In this context, of Meskhetian Turkish concurrence with Soviet perceptions of their non-national groupness, and the absence of their own homeland and a consensus as to where they should be, the statement that, 'Our homeland is the Soviet Union' acquires both more force and more poignancy. During the Soviet period, along with the national homeland of national peoples, the entire Union was also referred to as the *rodina* (*R*), homeland.³⁰⁷ Its emotive value is illustrated by one man's story about his army service. He talked proudly of having observed a Finnish plane fly over the border, which his commander denied, declaring it was a bird. After the plane flew over the Kremlin in Moscow, the commander shot himself. 'We used to serve for the homeland,' he said. 'But now the homeland doesn't exist (*rodini neto* (*R*)).' He shrugged when I asked what they served for now.³⁰⁸

Attachment to the Soviet Union seems, then, to be more than nostalgia for the low prices of goods, healthcare and holidays, although of course these play a part. The Soviet Union was, at least as they speak of it now, an 'imagined community' in which they feel they belonged (cf. Anderson 1991:6, Wallman 1998:181). Without an administrative homeland, the association with the whole Union was, and continues to be, of particular significance. With its collapse, not only do they have no homeland to return to or yearn for, but the (political) space within which they feel that they belonged has also gone. One man said bitterly, 'They ask, 'Where are you from?' If we say the Soviet Union, they say, 'The Soviet Union no longer exists; you are from no-where, no-one.' Furthermore, their experience of displacement is specifically Soviet, in the sense that in 1989 and 1990 they fled within the borders of the Soviet Union. At least until 1991, and in many cases until more recently, most were able to travel (to visit kin, or to relocate) across their former homeland with relative ease. With the introduction of visa restrictions by some of the newly independent states, and other measures hindering travel, both their homeland (as the Soviet Union) and their community (of Meskhetian Turkish kin) has fragmented.

The feeling of being in limbo, without a (state) homeland, is accentuated because it also presents practical problems, namely, the unavailability of official identification

³⁰⁷ Critchlow has undertaken an analysis of the uses of *vatan*, the Uzbek and Azeri word for 'homeland' in the vernacular media of these then Soviet Republics. He found it to refer to 'supra-national, subnational and national' entities, including both the USSR as a whole, and the writer's region or town, as well as the 'national' republic (Critchlow 1986).

³⁰⁸ That this is not simply the bravado of men recollecting their exploits in uniform is shown by the large numbers of men and their families now seeking to avoid such exploits. My informant is following a common practice in seeking to buy the *voynii billet* (*R*) (the booklet issued to young men who have completed their service) for his nephew, so that he can avoid conscription.

documents. As Humphrey notes, 'entitlements in general have long been represented by possession of numerous inter-related documents' (1996/7:75). Loss or absence of these documents is a matter of great concern. Lur'e and Studenikin note that for many of Fergana's evacuated Meskhetian Turks, the primary concern was not the loss of their homes and livestock, but the question of who would replace their documents. One man repeated heatedly, 'How does one live without documents?' (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:25). His lament was prophetic, since the lack of documents continues to plague most of Krasnodar's Meskhetian Turks, and even those whom the authorities accept are entitled to them spend much time, money, and worry in their acquisition.

Documents represent membership of a collectivity. During the Soviet period, and in the early 1990s, the relevant collectivities, 'suzerainties' or 'collective domains,' were primarily the organisations that employed people, and hence provided their housing, education, access to health care, holidays and so forth. Although in the early 1990s, during the collapse of the Soviet Union and its immediate aftermath, membership of such collectivities was vital for obtaining even basic foodstuffs or housing (Humphrey 1991, 1996/7), the situation in Krasnodar at least is now not so dire. As the experience of Meskhetian Turks in Krymsk and Abinsk demonstrates, it is possible to live adequately, even relatively well, without membership of such collectivities.

However, documents also attest to membership of *the* collectivity, as expressed by 'Our homeland is the Soviet Union.' Humphrey uses the term 'collective domains' to refer to 'the quasi-feudal corporations... which confer a social status on their members and which in practice are still today the key units disposing of property and people in Russia,' institutions such as the *sovkhoz* (Humphrey 1996/7:70). As demonstrated in chapter two, such collective domains still exist in Krasnodar, and many Meskhetian Turks, with and without *propiski*, still benefit from their services, whether or not employed by them. At the same time, these local domains are of decreasing importance in enabling subsistence through the allocation of rights represented in documents. I prefer therefore to see the state as the collective domain by which Meskhetian Turks are 'no longer possessed'.

Although documents only represent rights and membership, the latter are talked about as if objects in themselves. Hadia, unusual in Krasnodar in having arrived prior to 1989 and therefore having obtained and retained a *propiska* (residence permit), talked of how she obtained a passport and citizenship for her son. When asked about the difference between a passport and citizenship, Hadia explained that he got his passport before citizenship. Thereafter, when asked how he obtained citizenship, she

explained that she had gone to one office, paid 8r, filled in a form, taken it to another office, paid another 21r, had the details typed into a computer, then gone to the savings bank, and paid again... and eventually been given a little slip of paper. Throughout these conversations she was discussing documents, not legal status.

The perception of citizenship as a piece of paper is rooted in the fact that for many Russian citizens the status is represented by a slip stapled into their existing (Soviet) passports, stating that the bearer is a citizen of the Russian Federation in accordance with the law of 28th November 1991. It is therefore possible to have a (Soviet) passport but not to have 'citizenship,' if the piece of paper has not been issued. This continues to be possible after the issuing of old Soviet passports ceased in the late 1990s, and they were replaced by new Russian passports, in which the statement asserting citizenship is pre-printed. In these cases, those people whom the authorities do not consider to have citizenship do not have a stamp and signature by the citizenship statement.³⁰⁹ Old passports are being phased out, and everyone must replace theirs at a cost to themselves of 250r. Hadia was confused as to why her son had to 'get' citizenship prior to obtaining his passport, since she had not 'had' citizenship (as a piece of paper) before obtaining her new-style passport. She added that the woman in the administrative office had said 'They don't give Turks *propiski*.'³¹⁰ Her son, however, obtained both his passport, with the required stamp for citizenship, and a *propiska*, and is now serving near Moscow as a conscript in the Russian army.

Hadia's case is unusual, and, as mentioned in chapter one, most Meskhetian Turks continue to be refused *propiski*, and hence other 'inter-related documents.' Ahmed has been more active than most in attempting to register.

Ahmed lives in Belorechensk, whence he arrived from Tashkent in 1990. In order to get a *propiska*, some years ago he 'wasted' \$620 on taking his case to the courts. He then went back to the Administration several times to apply for

³⁰⁹ Prior to 1991, although issued in the republics' languages, citizenship of individual republics did not exist; everyone was a citizen of the USSR. 'Citizenship' as printed statement was integral to the passport, and hence did not have to be obtained; one only had to obtain a *propiska* for one's place of residence.

³¹⁰ *Turkom propiski ne daiut (R)*. Until recently, all passports included a line for nationality. Citizenship and nationality, in the Russian Federation as in the Soviet Union, are different statuses, the former being membership of a state, the latter being membership of a state-defined, ethnic or national' group. National in this sense does not have the political connotations attributed to it in the west (Anderson 1991, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1992). The new Russian passports do not include one's nationality but this is still recorded in official records when one applies for a passport.

citizenship.³¹¹ He was eventually told that the papers had been handled by a woman who had left them on her desk when she went on holiday, and they had been lost. Ahmed evidently did not believe this story. His *propiska*, and those of his wife, sister and mother, were annulled in 1996. In the spring of 2000, Ahmed painted the offices of the local police (walls and ceilings of eleven rooms, and 14m of corridor), doing work worth 15,000r. For this he was paid 2000r, because it had been agreed that his documents would be 'done' while he painted. But he was told that a 'Commission' was to be held, and he could not be registered because they are not giving *propiski* to any Meskhetian Turks at the moment. He was told to wait until August. 'If there wasn't Turk written in my passport, there would be no problems,' he explained. Ahmed's wife went to see the police chief herself. He was sympathetic, but his hands were tied: he is not allowed to give *propiski* to Meskhetian Turks. 'If you were even Jews, I could do it.' Ahmed's wife continued, 'If we were Kurds, or Yezidis, or Armenians, they would give us a *propiska*. Only not to Turks.' In August they were temporarily registered for a further eight months, and there was no indication that they would obtain *propiski* in the foreseeable future.

Ahmed's experience demonstrates the authorities' continued insistence on the role of 'nationality' in allocating rights (and hence documents). As discussed in chapter one, the Krasnodar authorities are attempting to bully Meskhetian Turks into leaving the region. In doing so, they have established a new passport regime which Meskhetian Turks attempt to follow using the established Soviet norms. As one man stated, then 'you could de-register in one place, move, and register the same day you arrive, no questions.' Seeing present day *propiski* in Krasnodar in the same light as those issued in the Soviet past leads, for the most part, to confusion, objectification of a legal status in a piece of paper, but not to obtaining documents.

Working with the State

Attitudes to the loss of the Soviet Union are also expressed, although less explicitly, in Meskhetian Turks' laments regarding 'work,' *rabota* (R). One woman summarised the opinions of many when she declared that 'Nobody works'³¹² now; they all do business

³¹¹ If a person has a *propiska* they may apply to be granted citizenship after a certain period of residency in Russia. Members of the Russian Human Rights organisation Memorial have consistently argued that this application is unnecessary, since by Russian Federation law the Meskhetian Turks are Russian citizens, but have not been given the appropriate documents (Forced Migration Projects 1998:9; Ossipov 2000; Ossipov & Cherepova 1996).

³¹² *rabotaet* (R).

(*biznesom zanimaiu'sia (R)*).¹ In rural southern Russia, a *biznesmen* is anyone who uses his contacts, capital, and entrepreneurial activities to obtain an income. Whereas Humphrey defines *biznesmen* as 'managers who run new private conglomerates,' and identifies six types of traders, I suggest that for the Meskhetian Turks a *biznesmen* sells products grown by his household; bought at a city market to sell for more locally; or sells items obtained by other means (Humphrey 1999:34). Among the Meskhetian Turks, to do '*biznes*,' or simply to sell things, *torgovat'* (*R*), is no longer overtly despised as speculation. During the Soviet era buying goods and then reselling them at a higher price was illegal, and the majority of the population shared the view of such profiteering as despicable, since it is non-productive labour which benefits only the individual and not society (Humphrey 1991:12). The Meskhetian Turks' present approach is in part due to the fact that so many rely on trading or 'business' for survival, but also because the income is seen as the legitimate product of their hard labour. But this negative conception of profit remains among much of the rural population, and in part explains Russian hostility to Meskhetian Turks practising what is the development of activities which were illegal during the Soviet era (Humphrey 1991,1999). Articles in local newspapers regularly accuse Meskhetian Turks and Armenians of monopolising meat and produce markets and thus maintaining high prices (for example, Gusev 2000).

The conversation begun by the woman who declared that 'Nobody works now; they all do business,' continued when her husband's brother agreed with her, adding that 'Fifty per cent of the population here is unemployed,' a figure in which he included himself. Apart from the serious material strictures that lack of work implies, 'unemployment' is also trying given the Meskhetian Turks' value-laden conceptions of 'work.' As mentioned in chapter one, many Meskhetian Turks saw their arrival in Uzbekistan as a recognition of their work-loving nature, as an industrious people (*trudoliubivyi narod (R)*), 'a people that likes to work, that does not leave work undone.' The Uzbek president is said to have suggested that, instead of being drowned in the Caspian Sea, they should work for him, to transform the barren land that was the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. This, they feel, they duly did, but the Uzbeks became jealous of their achievements and threw them out. History repeated itself when they were evacuated to central Russia, another region in need of development. One man insisted that they had again transformed the land. He explained that there are state and collective farms in Rostov *oblast'* which have not paid wages for ten years. However, the *sovkhos* from which Meskhetian Turks hire and farm land can now afford to pay not only monthly wages to its workers but also pensions to its former employees.

Meskhethian Turks explain that they work hard in the summer and relax in the winter, but because they do not spend all of their cash on drink, they have money to spend in the autumn. The Russians, they say, who have drunk all their money, see them as rich, and complain about 'rich refugees.' Notably even Russians who declare 'I can't stand them, I've had it up to here with Turks,' agree that 'They are very honest people. They work hard.'³¹³ In part, this Meskhethian Turkish pride in labour stems from their ability to work the land. Salim told of an old woman at the market who complained that his tomatoes were too expensive, saying, 'You Turks should be thrown out.' Salim told her, 'The price is because of my labour. Look at my hands!' The old woman responded, 'Don't try to teach us! We also work!' Salim replied, 'If you worked, you would know the price of labour, and not say they are expensive.' At this the woman's husband led her away. Salim declared, 'He understood, she didn't.' He also complained of a nephew who visited from Turkey, and did not have the strength to turn the handle to start their jeep. His nephew repeatedly tried to convince Salim to move to Turkey, saying that he would live easily, but Salim clearly did not want to 'live easily' if it involved having hands as weak as his nephew's.

Although they have always been a largely rural, farming people, and are proud of their physical work, Meskhethian Turks do not consider working the land to be ideal. For other peasant communities, membership and status in the community is tied closely with ownership and working of the land.³¹⁴ But given the Meskhethian Turks' lack of attachment to any territory, let alone that in Krasnodar, it is not altogether surprising that they do not share this ideology. Instead, most would prefer to be working 'by profession'; that is, according to their academic or vocational training. Their respect for those who do work thus was demonstrated by the awed manner in which they spoke of 'the professor' with whom I stayed while in Krasnodar city, and the comment made of my visiting partner by an elderly Meskhethian Turkish woman, who said, 'He has bride's hands!' She was referring to their pale and uncalledoused nature, which demonstrated that, like a bride,³¹⁵ he had never laboured on the land, but instead works 'by profession.' My informants hold qualifications in, among other things, gas installation,

³¹³ Their complaint is that the Meskhethian Turkish population is increasing relative to Russians, because they work hard and do not drink. In reality, the Meskhethian Turkish population is relatively stable, and the birth rate is only slightly higher than that of out-migration (Ossipov 2000:13). However, the Russian population is shrinking.

³¹⁴ On the Portuguese Alto Minho, the agricultural household forms the elementary social unit, and it is labouring the land, rather than genealogical position, that assigns authority to the household's heads. The 'direct link to the land is the essential condition for full participation in this peasant society,' to the extent that landless peasants seldom marry, since marriage makes little sense without participation in the labour of a landed household. (Pina-Cabral 1986:32-33, 65, 152).

³¹⁵ In practice most teenage girls work hard, at home and in the fields, prior to their marriage. They are however admired for having pale skin, demonstrating that they have not been exposed to the sun as much as their mothers.

electrical engineering, brick laying, and tractor driving. But, apart from a few medical personnel (one dentist and one nurse), none works 'by profession.' In part this can be attributed to the lack of such jobs in Russia's current economic climate, but more significant is the fact that without a *propiska* (residence permit) they are not entitled to such employment.

However the preference for work 'by profession' over labouring on the land is not a simple dichotomy of skilled versus physical labour. Rather, 'work,' *rabota* (*R*), embodies important ideological values, and means more than the labour (*trud* (*R*)) involved in earning a living.³¹⁶ To 'work' involves one in a mutually beneficial relationship with the state; a relationship which, with their move to Krasnodar and the passing of the Soviet Union, has changed dramatically. Within the socialist system, one's social status was defined by one's status as a worker. 'Everyone had the right to work; no-one had the right not to work... Work served as both the instrument and measure of normality' (Kotkin 1995:202). Or, as one of my informants said, 'It was better earlier (*Biulo luchshe ran'she* (*R*)). Then everybody had a job; to be without a job was unimaginable. Now half the people are jobless.' It was not simply that there were jobs for all, but that the concept of unemployment was impossible, since it was through work that one became a full member of society (Swain 1985:7). In return for the worker's labour, the state provided benefits, in what Humphrey describes as an exchange, 'between the workers who were persuaded to produce something and hand it over to the state and the managers who agreed to redistribute state-benefits of every kind to the workers' (Humphrey 1996/7:74). Such benefits included healthcare, social benefits, pensions on retirement, housing, education, holidays, and fixed-price goods, as discussed above.

Therefore, to 'not work' implies more than not to physically labour; it means that one is not fully part of society, because one is not participating in a relationship with the state. 'Work,' in the sense employed by post-Soviet Meskhetian Turks, is only that employment which is recognised as 'work' by the state. Just as citizenship is a piece of paper, so work is identified through a document. When I said to Salim that he wasn't unemployed because he works the *sovkhos* land, he insisted, 'No, we do not have a book where it is written how much we have worked.' The book in question is the *trudovaia knizhka* (*R*) (labour book) in which a person's type of work and length of service are recorded. After completing their *stazh* (*R*) (a certain number of worked years, differing according to profession) the worker is entitled to a pension, although

³¹⁶ White (1994:130) discusses a contrasting distinction between labour and work made by urban Turkish women.

possession of a *trudovaia knizhka* also entitles one to other benefits. I was told that only companies and institutions which pay tax record the *stazh*, and therefore only working for these entities constitutes *rabota*, 'work.' Doing business, growing crops on hired *sovkhoz* land, other entrepreneurial activities, although they bring in a considerable income, do not count as work.

The entitlement to a pension, while important for some, is mostly of limited financial value, not only because the amount is small (about 600r a month in early 2000), but more because Meskhetian Turks do not expect to have to provide for themselves in their old age. Their sons will and do support them. Rather, value is located in the fact that the pension and other entitlements accruing to one who 'works' demonstrates their involvement with the state, and vice versa. Humphrey notes that the success of the Soviet system of work collectives and enterprises, was measured not in profit but in the material, social and cultural benefits it provided for its members (1996:74). The Meskhetian Turks' continued high-regard for (low-paid) 'work' over (high-earning) business or trade indicates that they continue to evaluate their lifestyles in terms which imply preference for beneficial exchange with the state.³¹⁷

Given that, during the Soviet period, it was through work rather than citizenship that one achieved social status, and it was through work that one formed a mutually beneficial relationship with the state, it now becomes clear why Meskhetian Turks continue to see citizenship as a document that needs to be obtained, rather than a status they had until 1992 (and thereafter) but which is not recognised. As one man said, while he used to have a passport for the USSR, 'Earlier there was no citizenship.' While factually inaccurate, his statement shows that citizenship was not the means through which one obtained benefits, and was not a salient issue in everyday life. Meskhetian Turks continue to think in Soviet terms, with regard to their rights to state support and the means (work) through which this should be obtained.³¹⁸

Public Loss

While 'return' to Uzbekistan, or even Georgia, is physically (if not politically) feasible, the Soviet Union is not a place to which one could return. Some do attempt to rectify this through the ballot box. During Russia's 1999 regional and 2000 Presidential

³¹⁷ Pine describes a contrasting case among Gorale in Poland, for whom work for the socialist state was negatively valued (Pine forthcoming).

³¹⁸ Haney's analysis of Hungarian women's sense of entitlement on the basis that 'We are still mothers' illustrates similar continued expectations of one's relationship with the state in a post-socialist context (Haney 1999).

elections, many of the Meskhetian Turks who could vote did so for the Communist party. In doing so, they supported the party of Kondratenko, the then Communist *krai* Governor, who is generally despised for his discriminatory stance towards non-Russian minorities, and whose inflammatory remarks encourage the policies which deny *propiski* and citizenship to their relatives.³¹⁹ But many feel they have little control over this sphere, declaring, 'They have already decided without us.'³²⁰ For the most part, it is pragmatically recognised that the Soviet Union is past, although this does not prevent them from viewing the realities of present-day politics through a lens of ideals and practices imbued in the past.

In a similar construction of 'homeland,' Assyrian Iraqi refugees in London call their country of origin Mesopotamia, believing themselves to be descendants of the founders of the Assyrian Empire in Mesopotamia which collapsed in 612 BC (Al-Rasheed 1994:215). Al-Rasheed interprets this usage as being a way of disassociating themselves from modern Iraq. But such an approach may also be understood as identification with a non-territorial entity, as in the case of the Meskhetian Turks. Some scholars who refute the 'deterritorialisation of identity' do so primarily because the state is territorial, and thus persons are so by default, through identification with the state (Kibreab 1999:408, see introduction). But as I have shown, people who identify with a state do not necessarily see themselves as connected to the land which that state occupies. My informants' positive association with the Soviet Union, and their usage of village affiliation which does not draw value from geographical origins (see chapter three), illustrate the importance of looking beyond territoriality in examining all forms of social identification, with regard to units as small as the household and as large as the state.

Furthermore, the oft-repeated lament, that 'earlier it was better,' demonstrates that, while personal suffering cannot be easily expressed, the Meskhetian Turks do feel and express loss with relative frequency. It is however notable that this public discourse of suffering and loss refers not to displacement from a geographical place (Uzbekistan or Georgia), nor to the personal suffering of injury to themselves as members of a 'nationality' or loss of relatives, as is discussed by most writers concerned with this

³¹⁹ Isla seeks to explain a similar occurrence: the election as Governor, by the terrorised population of a region of Argentina, of the General earlier in charge of the terrorisation (Isla 1998).

³²⁰ This sentiment was not limited to the Meskhetian Turkish population but shared by other rural Krasnodarians. In a local newspaper article, a seventy-five year-old woman was quoted as saying that whoever she voted for, Putin would be elected anyway. 'No-one is interested in what we think. They all will do it their way.' The same article noted that more people in Krasnodar voted for the Communist leader in the presidential elections than did the average Russian population.

group in particular, and refugees in general. Rather, it is the collapse and loss of the Soviet Union, a non-territorially specific state, that is publicly mourned, and which provides an acceptable discourse of suffering for the Meskhetian Turks. Although this affects one personally to a greater or lesser extent, it remains a legitimate, public shared lament. In as much as many other inhabitants of rural Russia share the sentiments expressed by my informants, lamenting the loss of the Soviet Union ensures that they remain part of the 'social history of rural people in general' (Ranger 1994:279). The loss of the Soviet Union unites them with their present neighbours, and is a theme of suffering for which there is both public and communal space for expression.

Conclusion

Lur'e and Studenikin's work contains several photographs of the events which occurred in Fergana in June 1989 (1990). These include pictures of murdered men's bodies lying in the street and corpses of those burnt alive in their homes; and several of men, women and children awaiting evacuation and walking to aeroplanes. Of the latter, one shows a small child sat by a suitcase onto which are tied two shiny metal teapots. The picture of teapots, like Gulpaşa's narrative image of carrying dough to bake at her father-in-law's house (see chapter two), neatly represents the Meskhetian Turks' life in Russia following their displacement. Such shiny teapots, and such suitcases, are brought out at weddings: the former to provide sustenance to the hundreds of guests; the latter to carry gifts to display to the bride before taking her to her new home. They are basic items of pragmatic use, but also valued symbols of celebratory construction and maintenance of the only people who really matter, one's kin. They are also easy to carry, should one need to move quickly.

The experience of the Meskhetian Turks bears out the belief that forced migrants (like others who, following traumatic events, do not move elsewhere) 'continue to live, to survive, and to cope' (Das & Kleinman 2001:1). Moreover, while economic maintenance is obviously a concern for refugees, the foregrounding of economic survival in the literature on refugees does not accurately reflect the primary interests of the Meskhetian Turks and probably those of other forced migrants. My informants are generally more concerned with other forms of continuity, primarily those of relatedness, which (as discussed in chapter two) play little role in daily economic activities. Displaced persons do not necessarily 'lose their identity,' if by 'identity' we understand a self-understanding and connectedness with others, and cultural practices of the everyday and celebratory events. But while it is possible to rebuild or continue with 'normal' mundane life, traces of the events following which the mundane has been retrieved are scattered throughout social life (Das & Kleinman 2001:4). Such traces need not be narratives for us to recognise that a people has suffered, and remembers, trauma.

Continuity

When it occurred, forced migration was integrated into existing practices of household management and hospitality. Those who had to flee were hosted by relatives as guests, unless they stayed a considerable length of time, in which case they were

integrated as household members. The hospitality of one household, then in Kazakhstan, which hosted people fleeing from Uzbekistan in the early nineties, was remarked upon several times. Discussing the present difficult circumstances of the now widowed mother, another woman declared, 'All of the village lived at their house. And she never says a word. She never said a word. One woman washed her clothes and left the soap here; another took the powder and washed her own; another hers. Her bathroom was such chaos (*takoī bardak (R)*). She never says anything.' Regarding her husband, another said, 'Every day he would bring home a sheep and fifty loaves of bread in the back of his car, and every day she would cook at a *kazan* (huge pan) like the one we used at the wedding. And they usually ate vegetables. He never asked us to buy bread or meat or anything. Every day he bought a ticket to Krasnodar, and drove people to the airport, and phoned through to a man in Krasnodar so that someone met them here. This must have gone on for two months. And you never hear her say anything about it.'

This case is unusual in the expenditure incurred and the number of people hosted, but many other households in Krasnodar similarly integrated new arrivals while the latter established themselves and found houses. This pattern of residence, often of eight or ten people sharing a small two-roomed house, continued for several months, and the arrivals assumed temporary household membership through labour. As such, temporary residence following forced migration was a continuation of normal household labouring and kinship visiting practices, as discussed in chapters two and three. I suggest that the existence of these principles, that guests are always welcome and that those who share a household share the labour required to maintain it, provided a model of everyday social relations that the Meskhetian Turks adapted when tragedy struck.

Continuity is also maintained through the maintenance and creation of new kin through marriage, birth and visiting, as discussed in chapter four. In part this is achieved through the community of relatives temporarily acting as a household (chapter three). I recently received a letter from Aygün, whose reluctant marriage is described in chapter four, in which she worries about the fact that after a year and a half of marriage she has not become pregnant. She also expresses concern that her cousin, aged twenty, is not yet married, and suggested that a cousin on her mother's side should take her as his wife. The transformation, from embarrassed girl who refused to wear a head scarf into a woman integrated not only into her husband's household but also having into the adult perception of the necessity of marriage and childbirth, illustrates that Meskhetian

Turkish structures continue to enable the construction of new kin in the still uncertain circumstances of diaspora.

The same is true of events that occur when the norm of marital life is disturbed, through early widow-hood or divorce. Meskhetian Turkish widows are unlikely to remarry quickly, if at all (cf. Das 1990b: 369).³²¹ As one such woman explained, 'You may be asked for again, but we have loads of girls; only old men take us. I have been sitting for nine years.' But in this, those widowed by the events of 1989 are no different from those whose husbands died before or after displacement. Farida, whose husband Süleman's death in Fergana was discussed in chapter five, has to work to support her sons and parents-in-law, both by undertaking *sovkhoz* labour for cash and in all the practicalities of keeping a home. Her experience and stoicism is very similar to that of Kibria, who lost her husband to lightning in 1998, leaving her widowed before the age of thirty, with three daughters to support. She returned from Moscow to Krasnodar to join her mother, also widow before reaching fifty years of age, who works for the local *sovkhoz* despite absence of a *propiska*.

Aware of such continuities of response to traumatic life experience, Davis has argued for an anthropology of suffering which sees the trauma of deportation and displacement, or rape and loss of relatives through murder, as the extremes of a continuum of pain. Such a continuum also encompasses the absence of employment and trials of love, and socially instigated environmental disasters (Davis 1992). James notes a similar connectedness with regard to fear among Uduk refugees in Ethiopia, among whom 'the specific fears of war are merged with everyday malnutrition, illness, rain and cold, the constant hectoring of soldiers or officials, and almost regular lack of sleep and other sources of pain and stress' (James 1997:121).

Scheper-Hughes also insists on the related nature of the cruelties of everyday life with the crimes of war. She introduces the concept of 'peace-time crimes' in order to suggest that 'war-crimes are merely ordinary, everyday, crimes of public consent applied systematically and dramatically in times of war' (Scheper-Hughes 1997:473). More critical of her Brazilian informants than in her earlier work (1992), she does not blame the mothers for their acts, but is disturbed by their refusal to accept any responsibility for their babies' deaths. She notes that seeing the dead as angels whose deaths were meaningful closely resembles military thinking, but also that it is such ideas of un-grieved 'acceptable death' which enable the recruitment of new fighters in war, and new births in Brazilian shanty towns (Scheper-Hughes 1997:475). Similarly,

³²¹ Men, on the other hand, usually remarry within a year of their wife's death.

Spencer analyses everyday violence and aggression (homicide, sorcery and suicide) in Sinhala Sri Lanka, in order to better understand collective violence in the same society. He notes that,

'Like murder in everyday life, collective murder was a product of loss of control, of a breakdown in everyday restraint. The patterns to be discerned in it are not quite the pattern of everyday life, but the patterns which lie behind everyday repression' (Spencer 1990:616).

Others scholars refute the suggestion of such a continuum of suffering: most notably some of those writing about the Jewish Holocaust. Langer, for example, argues that the murder of the European Jewry was and remains unique, and that those who tried to warn the Allies of its occurrence failed in part because 'they addressed an audience unable to hear because their mind-set was not tuned, and had never been tuned, to the kind of crisis that was unfolding in Europe' (Langer 1997:47). Further, he asserts that its description as 'an example of mass suffering' is inadequate, since it risks 'limiting its scope by merging it with prior models that are meagre measures of the event.' However, others have shown that disbelief is characteristic of reactions to news of mass suffering, and thus it is dangerous to highlight one such event as unique. Sorabji argues that international observers failed to act to prevent further atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina precisely because they were 'tuned' to Nazi genocide and therefore refused to believe that anything which did not have the orderly and total nature of the Holocaust could be genocide (Sorabji 1994, see also Sereny 2000:xvii).

But irrespective of whether the Holocaust or any other event is unique, for some the experience of displacement, while similar to that of bereavement, remains 'outside the provisions of conventional social structure and social organisation,' such that refugees lack crucial supports available to those in normal situations of grief (Loizos 1981:131). That is, whether or not one may construct such a continuum of suffering, sometimes events occur which are so uniquely traumatic as to require considerable adaptation or development of existing practices in order to return people to some kind of normality.

However, I have argued that the Meskhetian Turks' representation of their forced migration suggests both that they have a model for responding to displacement, and that this model is part of a continuum of general techniques for dealing with personal suffering. They have responded to displacement through a pragmatic insistence on continuity, of domestic, economic, religious and kinship practices, and a lament that the state has not done the same. Such continuity is in part possible because of the

existence of a restriction on the expression of personal suffering, which is applicable to all: from a small child who falls off a platform; through a frightened young bride; to the parents and wives of those brutally murdered by Uzbeks or killed by lightning. This restriction is itself allied to the limited space available for individual choices and desires, since precedence is given to acting as a related person, according to gender, age and marital status.

Breaking the silence?

I have demonstrated that among the Meskhetian Turks personal emotional, and to some extent physical, pain is dealt with through keeping it to oneself (chapter five). In describing this as silence I do not mean to imply that such events are never discussed; rather that talking about them is seen as neither appropriate nor a useful way of reducing the pain. As discussed in chapter five, relative silence about one's personal feelings is the cultural appropriate response in many societies. Knudsen similarly notes of Vietnamese refugees that 'talk is not expected to relieve pain. Rather, silence continues to be held as the basic way of handling deeper feelings of bereavement and loss' (Knudsen 1995:25). The reasons for such silences vary both between and within societies. For example, during twenty years of Brazilian dictatorship the affluent classes kept silent about abductions, illegal arrests and deaths of intellectuals and journalists as they felt that authoritarian rule was necessary for the 'development' of Brazil; while poorer Brazilians were terrorised into silence and compliance by the actions and rumours of actions of the 'death squads' linked to the military police (Scheper-Hughes 1997:479). Similarly, the reasons why so many survivors of trauma (including Meskhetian Turks) relate their stories in neutral, unemotional terms also varies (Daniel 1996:143, Knudsen 1995:25, Loizos 1981:99, Merridale 2000:22, Reynolds 2000:143, Sorabji 1994:91, Stewart, M 2001). While researchers of those who are known to have suffered must be aware that silence has its own meaning we must also be wary of assuming that the meaning of silence is identical in all cases.

There are of course those who want to talk about their experiences, for whom expression of feelings and narration of events is therapeutic; who 'wanted their suffering to become known as if the reality of it could only be reclaimed after it had become part of a public discourse' (Das 1985:5, see also Das 1990b; Declich 2001:265).³²² Schwarz, writing on suffering in China, states that,

³²² One of my least politicised informants told me that I must write, so that they would be given their homeland, since, 'If you shoot someone with a bullet, he dies, doesn't feel anything. But if

'To suffer is to be shut in, to be locked up by grief in a world without light. A pane opens when sorrow is shared, spewn out of the closed world of the individual in pain. When others respond to the voice of the sufferer... the window of insight becomes broader still' (Schwarz 1997:128).

But I have demonstrated that Meskhetian Turks would not agree that suffering shared is suffering eased. I suggest that the assumption that talking is always desirable is misplaced, and can distort research into such peoples' experiences and self-perception. For example, Merndale notes her frustration with a dekulakised informant who (knowing of her interest in suffering) invited her to visit, but rather than discussing her trauma she spoke without bitterness of her successful careers as a musician. Another survivor from Kiev declared that 'the famine does not interest me very much,' and preferred to talk of Churchill and his father's horse (Merridale 2000:202,23-228). In claiming that 'these people have a fog of confusion to clear away, a web of lost identity, acceptance, grateful membership,' Merridale refuses to accept the evidence of her own data that narrative memorialisation, in addition to being undesirable, may not always be beneficial (ibid:242,293). Similarly Langer states, without evidence, that 'memory functions with or without speech'³²³ and 'cannot be silenced,' and will not countenance the possibility that encouragement to testify may not be beneficial to Holocaust victims (Langer 1991:50, see also Herman 1992:1).³²⁴

The example of the Meskhetian Turks indicates that we would be wise not to presume universality of the value of 'breaking the silence' of or for those who have suffered, if local circumstances do not provide a supportive 'landscape of memory,' within which

you hit him with a pen, he suffers.' But such demands that I write are not part of a strategy for dealing with trauma, and nor do they really entail an expectation that my words will bring about an alleviation of their conditions, let alone a 'homeland.' Notably this man usually shows far more faith in violence than words for solving conflicts or expressing his point of view, and he has shown no interest in going to Georgia. I therefore treat this comment with caution.

³²³ As anthropologists and psychologists have shown, memory is not a singular process, and is not limited to what is recalled (Bloch 1998a), but involves other processes including recording, retention, and prompting. The relationship between speech and these varying aspects of memory and remembering is a complicated matter for further research, and one which will continue to benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropology and psychology (Bloch 1998b, Kirmayer 1996).

³²⁴ In asking, 'would silence be better?', Langer rightly notes that we, as audience, must not encourage the silence of victims on the basis that 'it would spare us much pain' (Langer 1991 50). Yet his argument that memory cannot be silenced is based on videotaped oral testimonies by volunteers. These moments of testimony are out of the ordinary. Other (written) accounts of lives following the Holocaust demonstrate that some former victims choose to emphasise survival rather than victimhood in their daily lives, and thus do, to some extent, silence their memories (Karpf 1996:95). This suggests that conclusions about the functioning of memory with or without speech, made on the basis of evidence of people who have volunteered to speak (cf. Kirmayer 1996), are questionable.

suffering may be witnessed (Kirmayer 1996). Das, whose commitment to understanding the forms and consequences of suffering has been considerable, notes that,

'It is often considered the task of historiography to break the silences that announce the zones of taboo. There is even something heroic in the image of empowering women to speak and to give voice to the voiceless. I have myself found this a very complicated task, for when we use such imagery as breaking the silence, we may end by using our capacity to "unearth" hidden facts as a weapon' (Das 1997:88, cf. Leydesdorff et al 1999:6).

It is a salutary warning, as the verbal expression of trauma may exacerbate the sufferer's troubles.³²⁵ Probing for evidence of trauma can itself inflict further suffering. Merridale notes that the elderly Jewish people interviewed since Schindler's List by the Spielberg Shoah Foundation have suffered with the breaking of the silence.

'They had to force their memories to live again, find words to meet the expectations of interviewers from abroad. Some could talk of nothing but the death camps after their interviews, I was told, and others suffered palpitations, heart attacks, nights of anxious sleeplessness or bouts of depression' (Merridale 2000:293).

Similarly, in the specific context of refugees, Knudsen notes that therapeutic interviews can be threatening, since they both threaten the representation of oneself as able to cope and thus suitable for resettlement in a safer setting; and are contrary to the Vietnamese practice that one discusses one's problems only with close kin and friends and certainly not with strangers (Knudsen 1991,1995, cf. Fonseca 1996:12,259).

In this context, it is particularly important that anthropologists do not cause further hurt. In his analysis of post-war Nigeria, Last examines the government policy of reconciliation. He notes that it did not demand that people forget or forgive, only that hurts were not allowed to stand in the way of everyday life. 'It was simply about being able to work together, to live as neighbours as and when necessary' (Last 2000:316). Experience of war and flight are aired within the local communities of church, family network and town union, and thus kept from the more public sphere where they may prevent reconstruction. Although Last notes an ambivalence as to whether this form of

³²⁵ Not talking may be a strategy for maintaining one's dignity, as has been noted in reference to Khmer refugees and Holocaust victims (Reynell 1989:153, Karpf 1996).

reconciliation has been a success, he is clearly aware that the 'watchers' (those outside the reconciling community including international journalists, historians, other governments and anthropologists) are more inflexible than those who face the reality of continuing to live after conflict, and that their judgements may be misplaced, unrealistic, and, if acted upon, damaging. Where a lasting supportive context for the expression and negotiation of personal trauma is lacking, as it is culturally among Meskhetian Turks and politically in Krasnodar, we must be very careful when asking, through our questioning, that people break their silences.

This is not to say that we should not write, nor make others aware that injustices are occurring or have done so in the past. On the contrary, anthropologists' ability to act as 'cultural brokers' between populations and other watchers may make our contribution more important in such circumstances. But we must be aware that in writing and acting we make our informants more 'visible,' and that such visibility may well have unintended, and not necessarily positive, consequences (James 2000).

Our work is also needed in order to examine *why* horrific events occur. Scheper-Hughes' application of the concept of 'peace-time crimes' stems from her desire to understand 'what makes genocide possible?' (Scheper-Hughes 1997). A similar question is asked by Sereny in her examinations of the humanity of Nazi officials, which leads her to begin to 'understand both the idealism and the capacity of a tyranny to pervert human instincts from good to bad' (Sereny 2000:xii). Other anthropologists have demonstrated that there is a 'certain logic' to violence, in the sense that it is possible to view the violence as an invocation of (or assault upon) important contemporary social concepts (Loizos 1988:639; Sorabji 1994; Spencer 1990:621), or as a result of a history of examples set by states and leaders (Loizos 1981:91; 1988:649).

To understand why people can commit such atrocities is neither to condone them, nor to perceive communal violence as inevitable. Anthropological work has shown that in most, if not all, such situations there are some who refuse to make the connection between everyday norms and the grand narratives of communal violence. Kanapathipillai records the deteriorating relationship between one Tamil woman and her Sinhala landlord, but commends the former for defining the conflict 'as one over local issues rather than national ones,' while recognising that the landlord used national issues as an excuse to enflame local ones (Kanapathipillai 1990:324-328). Also in Sri Lanka, Spencer analyses the non-participation of his Sinhala friend who refused to accept the moral arguments that, for others, allowed the violence to 'make sense'; and

thus avoided dragging himself and his village into the conflict. Spencer concludes that while social scientists are trained to provide explanations, his informant's refusal to understand may teach us to examine the spaces made for intentional inaction by intentional incomprehension. Thus, 'rather than arguing too hastily across our moments of misrecognition or incomprehension in our encounters with violence, we may instead choose to reflect on them and learn from what they can teach us' (Spencer 2000:137).

In the same manner, we may learn from the Meskhetian Turks' refusal to totalise themselves or the Uzbeks (chapter one; cf. Das 1998, Kanapathipillai 1990:332, Kakar 1996:35,104; Spencer 2000), and their refusal to renounce their identification with a state that has disappeared (chapter six; cf. Ugrešić 1998). They demonstrate that creation or maintenance of a nationalistic community is not a pre-requisite for coping with suffering, and that therefore research into the experience of displacement may be more fruitful if it examines other themes than that of the construction or reconstruction of 'national' and 'ethnic' affiliations and communities.

The Future

Part of the reason that Last identifies as to why watchers are prone to make 'unattainable demands' of reconciliation following conflict is that they are obsessed with the past and insist on the value of history. But he notes that for his Hausa colleagues, the past is of little political relevance.

'Indeed "peoples without history" may not want to have a history (but European scholars will give them one anyway); it is those with a history who suffer... Indeed, history is only the "outer layer" both of society and of the individual; the inner core has a different truth to it ("myth"?), with other, larger forces at work shaping its destiny' (Last 2000:325).

Watchers of violence who insist on remembering history fail to accept that victims as well as perpetrators may feel that a line can and should be drawn under the past, and are thus 'trespassing into territory that is either past or private (or both)' (op cit). In the Meskhetian Turkish context, such trespassing involves both demanding that victims tell their stories, and that they agree to a territorialised history of themselves.

In relation to this first kind of trespass, demands for testimony, the lack of expression of suffering on the part of the immediate survivors means that the events experienced by

one Meskhetian Turkish generation do not become enacted as 'autobiographical memories' by their children (Bloch 1998b). This may mean that these events are ultimately forgotten, or at least become no more than narratives that one may hear from one's history teacher. On the other hand, with the passing of those who directly suffered, discourse about 1989 (and 1944) will cease to be an expression of personal suffering. As such, in depersonalised form it may become an acceptable lament, similar to that of the loss of the Soviet Union. Time will tell. Yet the power of the 'earlier it was better' litany stems from the Meskhetian Turks' continued perception of themselves as Soviets, rather than a reflection on events in the past (chapter six). As Bloch notes, how people represent themselves to themselves in history has a bearing on how they react to traumatic events in the present (Bloch 1996:280). Given the Meskhetian Turks' a-historical perception of their collectivity (chapter one), political mobilisation around even depersonalised suffering seems unlikely.

Related to the second form of trespass, insisting on a territorialised history, there is also danger that my informants' children will have their own personal narratives of forced displacement, if political circumstances mean that they are forced to leave Russia for Georgia, which others define as their (territorial) homeland. Although the Georgian government is stalling on their obligations to the Council of Europe to enable the 'repatriation' of the Meskhetian Turks by 2012, it has not reneged on them completely (Adam n.d., MINELRES 19 Dec 2001). At the same time, Krasnodar's new Governor Tkachev is developing further measures to encourage migrants to leave the *krai* (see chapter one). Ray argues that while Meskhetian Turks do not have a sentimental attachment to Georgia, they do feel that they have a right to a place for communal settlement, and that 'repatriation signifies security from a possible third forced migration' (Ray 2000:406). While I agree with most of Ray's interpretations, I fear that the possibility of repatriation, rather than securing against further displacement, would rather instigate it, as it would legitimise the Krasnodar authorities' pressure on the Meskhetian Turks to leave the *krai*.

Therefore scholars who insist on the Meskhetian Turks' right to reparations and to repatriation not only trespass on the manner in which my informants represent themselves to themselves in history - which has been shown in this thesis to have a bearing on how they cope with their experiences of the past - but also tell them stories about themselves which may raise unrealistic hopes if not actually force them to move. As noted with regard to other refugees, their future is frequently decided upon by others. Caught up in the political process, their hopes or desires for 'return' are encouraged by those for whom it would be political suicide to admit that the chances

are slim, at the same time as the realism of choices is diminished by other political events (Loizos 1981:189). In this sense, Reynell's designation of her Khmer informants as 'political pawns' (Reynell 1989) may be applied to many other refugee populations, including the Greek (and Turkish, and Armenian) Cypriots, and the Meskhetian Turks.

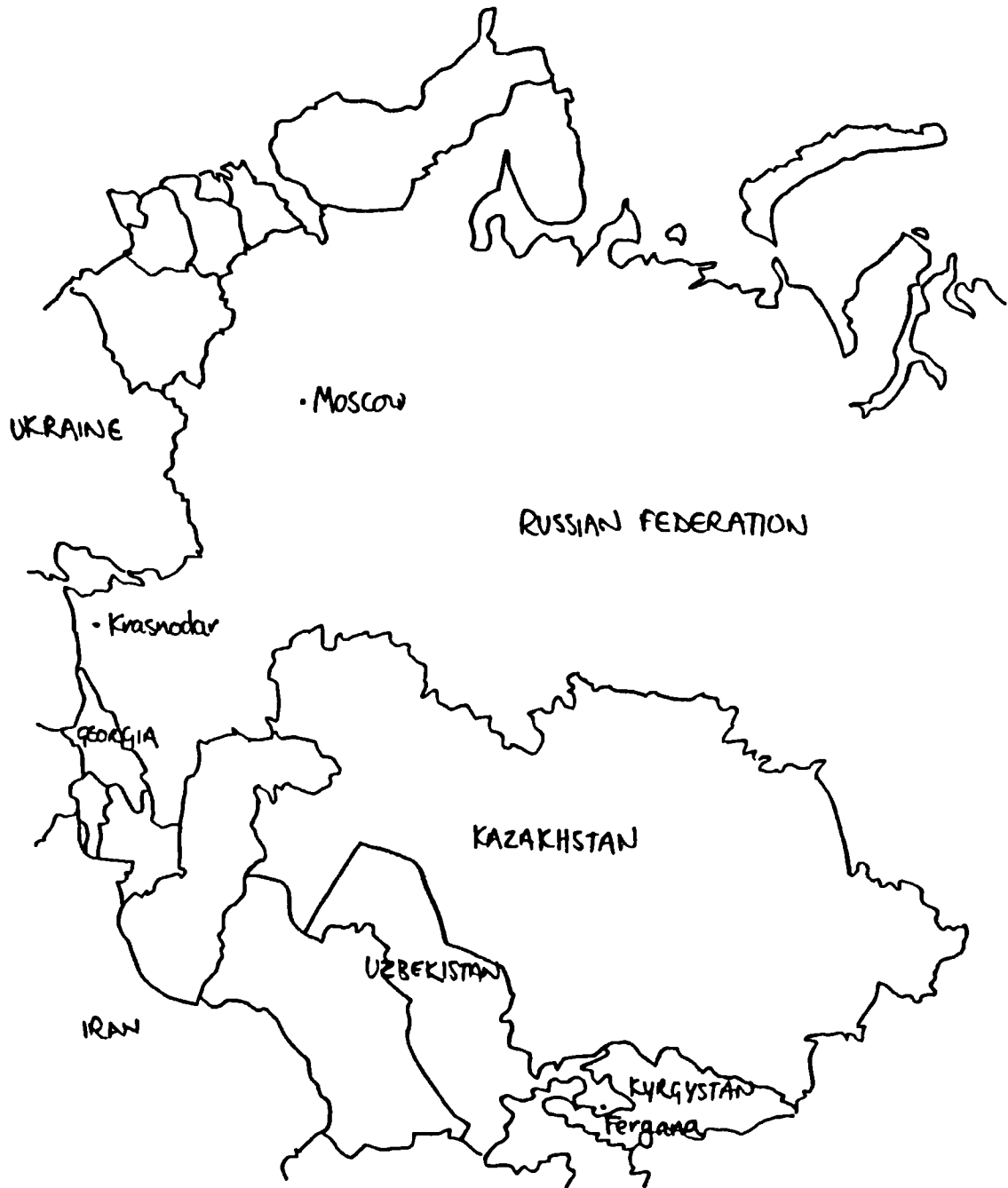
However, there is a danger that such a representation denies or ignores the agency of the populations concerned. While Reynell's informants were indeed trapped within the confines of camps, most forced migrants are not administratively supported and make their own arrangements. And with or without detailed knowledge of the options available to them, refugees re-examine the frameworks presented to them by their or others' 'leaders.'³²⁶ The Meskhetian Turks accept the framework which insists that groups are associated with territories, and within that their own place as a non-nationality (chapter six). In so doing, they refute Kibreab's insistence that 'there can be no deterritorialised identity in a territorialized space' (1999:387).

The Meskhetian Turks examine their options for the future in pragmatic terms, aware of their past residence in Georgia but primarily concerned for the safety and livelihood of their households and relatives, and only secondarily for the cohesion of their community. We would be wise to learn from this 'tired people' if we wish to understand how people live after forced migration. Rather than seeking out grand narratives of group cohesion and self-understanding, we should look first for the ways in which those who have suffered utilise existing practical strategies for living and coping.

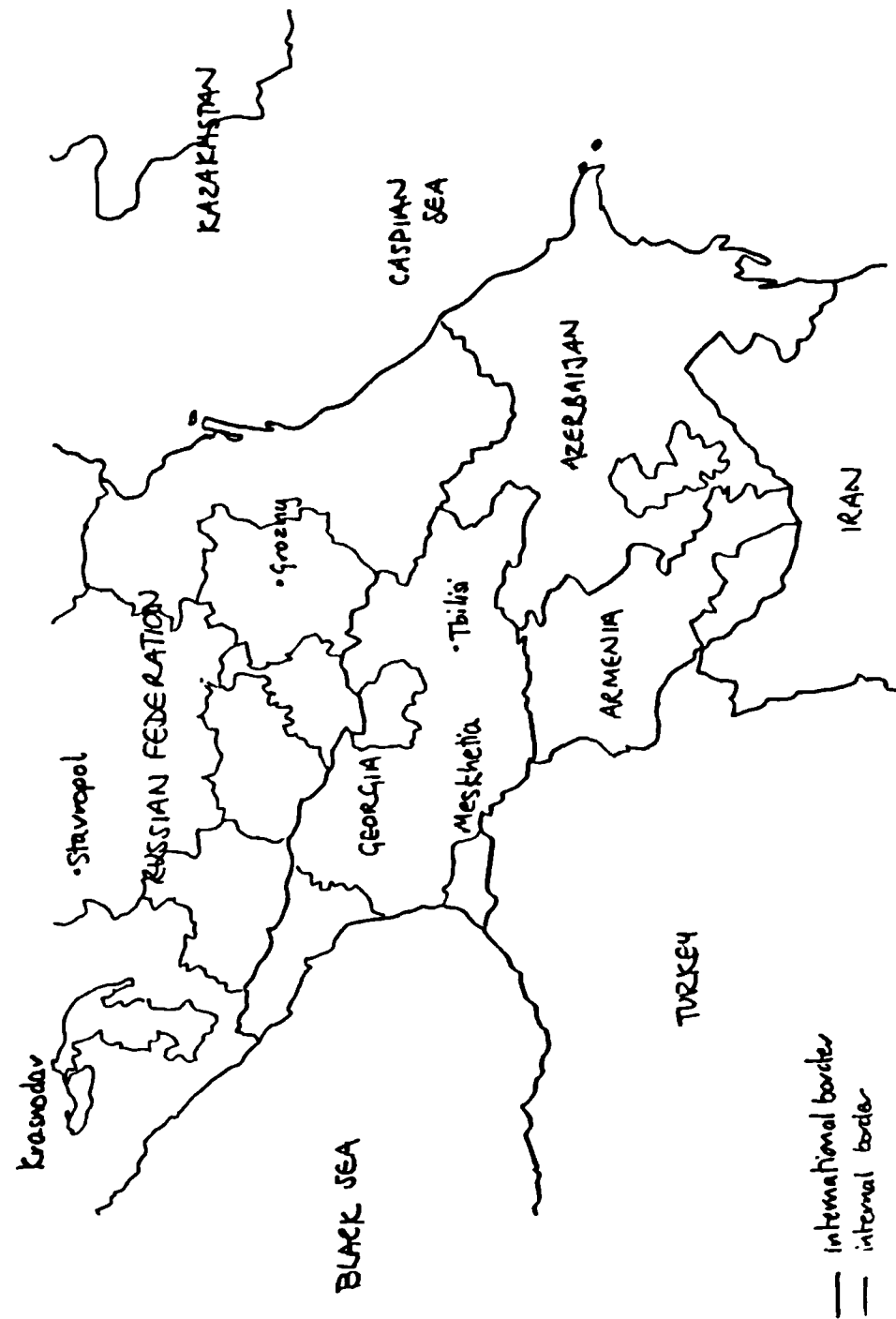
³²⁶ Significant in this context is the 'myth of return,' which, although it may be communally maintained, does not imply that that individuals will act upon the myth (Al-Rasheed 1994). Zetter notes with reference to Greek Cypriot refugees that while 'the right to return remains an unequivocal demand, the exercise of that right may not be so clear cut' (Zetter 1994:316).

Appendix: Maps

a. Western Russia and Central Asia



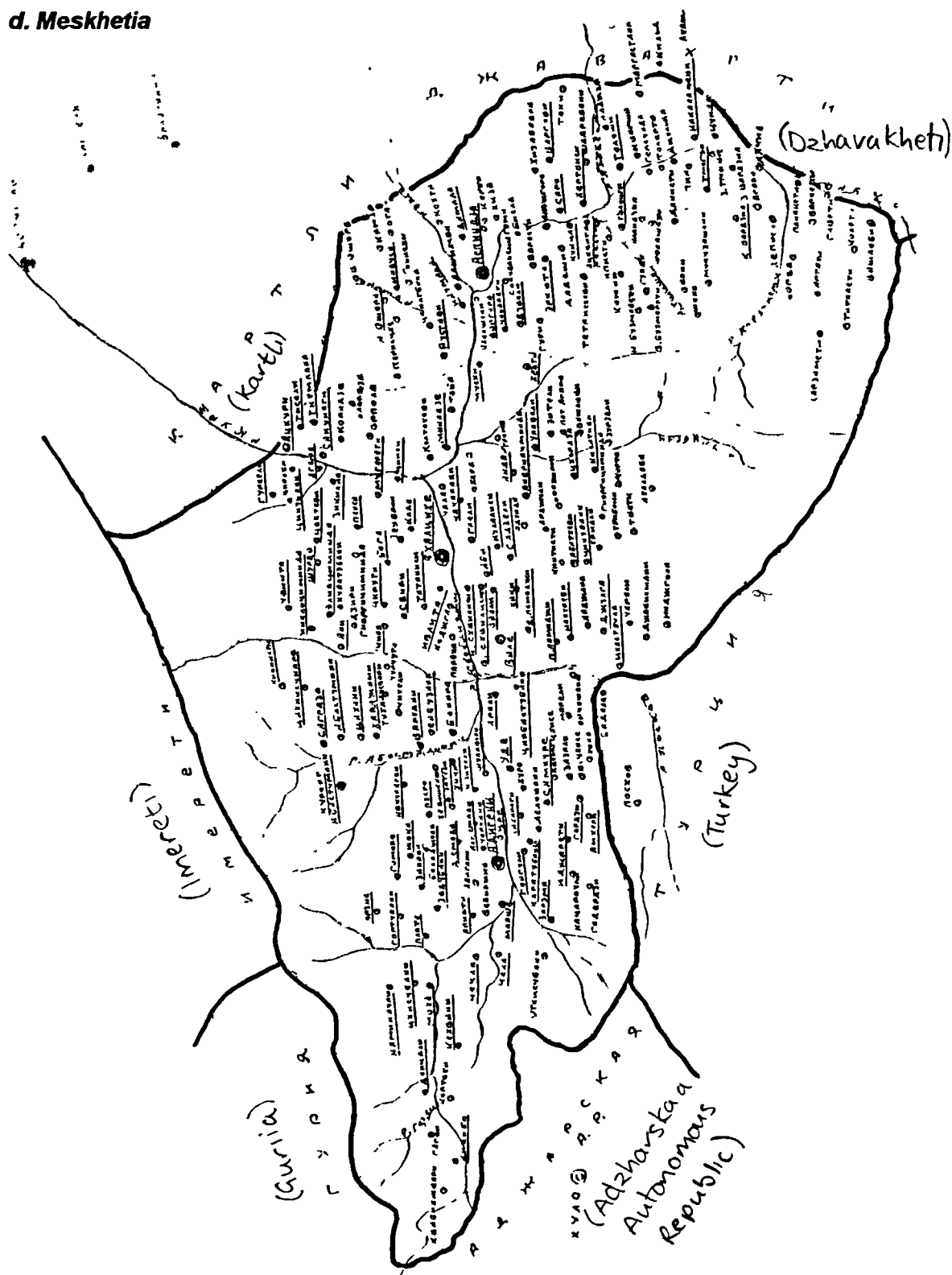
b. The Caucasus



c. Krasnodar



d. Meskhetia



Copy of a map given to me by an informant, who reported that it had been drawn by a Meskhetian Turk living in Nalchik in Kabardino-Balkaria, a Caucasus region of Russia to the east of Krasnodar. The names are the *kūv* of 1944 (see chapter three); those underlined are still inhabited (although not by Meskhetian Turks), while those not underlined no longer exist.

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